

PKR to meet SAPP to broker a deal
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A group of PKR leaders is expected to meet Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) leaders tomorrow to broker a deal to ensure a one-on-one contest against the BN in the upcoming Batu Sapi parliamentary by-election.

The last-ditch effort is necessary following the call by PKR *de facto* leader Anwar Ibrahim for SAPP not to contest in Batu Sapi to pave the way for the PKR to take on the ruling coalition in a straight fight.

Speaking to reporters at the Parliament lobby yesterday, Anwar announced that PKR would field a candidate in the Batu Sapi by-election.

SAPP, a Sabah-based party, had earlier indicated its intention to put up a candidate and would announce its candidate on Saturday.

BN will announce its candidate from PBS in Sandakan on Sunday.

When asked about the meeting, SAPP deputy president Eric Majimbun (*left*) said SAPP's door is always open for discussions for the common good of the people and the state.

"We welcome them to see us. We are ready for the talks. We want to listen to their views especially the possible cooperation to face the mighty BN in the Batu Sapi by-election," he told *Bernama* today.

However, he said, the SAPP supreme council had already made its decision to field a candidate in the by-election and that it was unlikely that the party would reverse its decision for now.

"SAPP is a local-based party... if we cannot contest in Sabah, where else can we contest? So, we hope that Pakatan Rakyat understands our situation," he said.

Asked about the possible deal, Majimbun said he was still in the dark about it, saying it was more of a political strategy.

"Nothing is impossible in politics and we will see when we meet them," he said.

Many political analysts believed that the failure of the two opposition parties to broker a deal might split the opposition votes, thus giving advantage to the ruling coalition to retain the seat.

The by-election is called following the death of its incumbent Edmund Chong Ket Wah.

Chong won the seat in the 2008 general election by a 3,708-majority, defeating independent candidate Chung ong Wing. Chong polled 9,479 votes as against Chung's 5,771.

Batu Sapi has 25,582 voters, of whom 24,047 are ordinary voters and 1,535 postal voters, with 15,099 or 59.02 percent of the voters being Muslim bumiputeras, 689 non-Muslim bumiputeras (2.69 percent), 9,737 Chinese (38.06 percent) and others, 57 (0.22 percent).

The nomination is on Oct 26 while polling is on Nov 4.

- Bernama

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