

Opposition to meet over Ijok by-election
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PAS Selangor has announced that it would meet with Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) Selangor today to decide on matters concerning the upcoming Ijok by-election.

Both PAS and PKR are members of the opposition coalition, Barisan Alternatif (BA).

In a statement today, PAS Selangor information chief Roslan Shahir Mohd Shahir said results of the meeting will be forwarded to the national leadership of the respective parties before a concrete decision can be reached.

"During the 2004 general election, the PKR candidate, with the help of PAS, lost by a small majority of 1,649 votes.

"It is one of the smallest majorities for the whole of Selangor during that election," he added.

Roslan said the PAS Kuala Selangor election machinery has been ordered to be on standby.

In the 2004 polls, PKR's Abdol Raman Moharam garnered 3,564 votes against MIC's K Sivalingam 5,213 votes.

Sivalingam, 59, died of a heart attack yesterday at the Chennai Airport in India. He was a third-term state assemblyperson for Ijok and a Selangor exco member. He was also a MIC central working committee member.

DAP's decision

Meanwhile, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said the party would decide on whether to contest for the seat only after Sivalingam's funeral.

"We'll decide in the next two days. It's not nice for us to talk about the by-election now. Let's concentrate on the (April 12) Machap (by-election in Malacca) first," he was quoted as saying by Bernama.

DAP had contested the seat in 1999, but its candidate V Krishnan lost to Sivalingam by more than 3,000 votes.

Contacted later, DAP Selangor chief Ean Yong Hian Wah said any decision to contest will be made by the central executive committee.

Should there be a straight fight between PKR and Barisan Nasional, Ean Yong said DAP Selangor would cooperate with PKR to ensure an opposition victory.

Asked if the same cooperation would be extended to PAS should the latter decide to contest, he replied: "Definitely no."

DAP was once part of the opposition coalition but withdrew after crossing swords with PAS

over its aim to set up an Islamic state.

When contacted PKR Selangor chief Abdul Khalid Ibrahim said the party's headquarters would issue a statement on their participation in the by-election within one or two days.

On the possibility of PKR fielding a candidate, Abdul Khalid said the voter demographics of the constituency 'favoured' the party's characteristic.

MIC getting prepared

A Bernama report quoted MIC President S Samy Vellu as saying that he was studying several names of potential candidates to be fielded in the seat.

"I am evaluating their services and contributions to the party and the people," he said.

The Works Minister said he would meet Prime Minister and Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to submit the list of would-be candidates for his consideration.

"The candidate need not necessarily be from Ijok but someone who works hard for the people," he added.

Election Commission (EC) chairperson Abdul Rashid Abdul Rahman reportedly announced that the date for the by-election would be determined within 10 days.

He said the EC is waiting for an official notice from the Selangor state assembly speaker to verify the vacancy.

He added that the by-election must be held as it was less than three years since the swearing-in of the Selangor assemblyperson on April 22, 2004.

According to election regulations, the by-election must be called 60 days after a vacancy at the state assembly.

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