

Khalid challenges rival to open debate
Malaysiakini.com
April 22, 2007

The opposition candidate for the crucial Ijok by-election has called for an open debate with his rival, Barisan Nasional's K Parthiban.

PKR's Khalid Ibrahim said today that the debate will give voters in Ijok the opportunity to hear directly from both candidates.

"If Selangor is a developed state, then public debates should be the norm," he said.

Khalid made the open debate call after meeting with worshippers who were at Batang Berjuntai's St Paul's Church for Sunday mass this morning.

The opposition candidate suggested Thursday as the best day for the debate as April 26 - the installation of Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin as the 13th Agong - is a public holiday.

"BN can set the time and there will be no conditions," he said.

The Ijok by-election sees a straight fight between BN's MIC candidate Parthiban, 38, and Khalid, 61. Polling day is on Saturday.

Mob incident

Khalid also commented about the incident yesterday where he and two other individuals were roughed up by a group of 20 aggressive youth who were wearing shirts complete with BN logos.

He brusquely dismissed the accusation by Selangor Menteri Besar Dr Mohd Khir Toyo that the mob could have been PKR supporters disguising themselves as BN men.

Khalid said it was beneath him to even comment on such a suggestion.

Malaysiakini reported yesterday that about 20 people, including some in Pemuda BN uniform surrounded Khalid and two freelance photographers when they were leaving a restaurant in Ijok after having lunch.

According to blogger-cum-photographer Jeff Ooi, a member of the mob threw a water bottle which smashed into the face of his companion. The impact broke the spectacles which the photographer was wearing and cut him below the eye.

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