

Abdullah: BN yet to decide by-election candidate
Malaysiakini.com
Aug 5, 2008

Barisan Nasional chairperson Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today said that the coalition has not decided on its candidate for the Permatang Pauh by-election.
MCPX

He also said that he had no knowledge that the Mufti of Perlis had been offered to contest for the seat on a BN ticket.

The Prime Minister added that the offer to Dr Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin could have been made by the people of Permatang Pauh because the mufti hailed from the constituency.

"Maybe the people of his kampung asked him to stand against Anwar Ibrahim when he (Mohd Asri) came by for a visit," Abdullah said, as quoted by Bernama.

permatang pauh parliamentary seat election results 180108Abdullah said he did not know when such an offer was made to Mohd Asri but it was not he who made it.

Meanwhile Home Minister Syed Hamid Albar said that the Permatang Pauh by-election would incur a high cost for the government, but he shied away from a question if BN should not contest for the seat.

The question of not contesting, he said, would have to be decided by top leaders.

Barisan Nasional is expected to discuss its candidate for the by-election at its supreme council meeting tomorrow.

The Election Commission will also be announcing tomorrow the nomination and election dates.

In recent days Kelantan Umno liaison committee chairperson Annuar Musa and Deputy Health Minister Dr Abdul Latiff Ahmad had suggested that the coalition does not contest in Permatang Pauh.

Ensuring public order

While Syed Hamid did not directly answer this, he however suggested that PKR's Pakatan Rakyat ally PAS should instead give a seat to Anwar rather than going for a by-election.

"But it is also good if PAS wants to give the seat to Anwar as it is part of Pakatan Rakyat. So in the family spirit, give the seat to Anwar," he said.

As for the high expenses, Syed Hamid, also an Umno Supreme Council member, said the by-election would involve implementing various measures to ensure a smooth, peaceful by-election.

"The Permatang Pauh by-election is so soon (after the general election). If in the beginning, Dr Wan Azizah had vacated the seat...she should have announced it then so that the people could decide," he said, as reported by Bernama.

PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail vacated the seat last week to allow her husband Anwar to return to Parliament after a 10-year absence.

Syed Hamid also declined to say how many police personnel would be deployed to monitor the situation during the by-election to ensure public order and safety.

"The number requires will depend on the people's state of emotions and other prevailing conditions. But we assure the people that we will be strict in enforcing the laws so as to have a smooth, peaceful by-election".

Use the ink

On another matter, Anwar's party PKR wants the Election Commission to use the indelible ink in Permatang Pauh.

PKR Youth chief Shamsul Iskandar Mohd Akin said the EC should test the use of the ink, which was shelved during the March 8 general election.

"This is the best time for the EC to test and see if the usage of indelible ink is workable," he said today.

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