

Goodies roll in, RM1 mil for Chinese schools
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The 'windfall' for voters in Permatang Pauh has started although the by-election campaign will only kick off officially tomorrow after nomination.
MCPX

The first election goodie came in the form of a RM1 million allocation to five Chinese schools by the Education Ministry in the constituency.

The allocation was announced during a visit by Deputy Education Minister Dr Wee Ka Siong and Barisan Nasional candidate Arif Shah Omar Shah to these schools.

arif shah omar shah bn umno candidate for permatang pauh by election 140808 12Met at a BN function later, Arif Shah cited the allocation - where the five schools will get RM200,000 each - as an example why the voters should back the ruling coalition.

"The Permatang Pauh people will benefit, you can see it happen (such as this allocation)," he told reporters after the launch of the BN Youth election machinery in Permatang Pasir.

Arif Shah, who is also the Seberang Jaya state assemblyperson, appealed to voters to give him a chance as he said he will then be able to have more allocations to develop the constituency.

"Although I am the Seberang Jaya state assemblyperson but in the state government, I am the opposition. I don't have the allocation.

"If I am the BN MP, I will be able to help not just Seberang Jaya but also Penanti and Permatang Pasir (voters) through my cordial relationship with the Prime Minister (Abdullah Ahmad Badawi), Deputy Prime Minister (Najib Abdul Razak) and the federal government," he said.

The three state seats fall under the Permatang Pauh parliamentary seat.

Declines to repeat it in BM

On the allocation, Arif Shah - who is Chinese-educated and fluent in Mandarin - described himself as "half-Chinese" and can fully apprehend the woes faced by the community.

Arif talked to reporters in Mandarin after the function.

However, when a journalist from state-owned RTM requested him to repeat the announcement of the allocation in Bahasa Malaysia, Arif Shah declined.

He said it was inappropriate for him to do so as the issue was related to the Chinese community.

Under the Election Offences Act 1954, a candidate cannot spend more than RM200,000 to contest a parliamentary seat and RM100,000 to contest a state seat.

However, there is a grey area on whether the allocation or goodies handed out by the candidate's party during election campaigns contradicts any election law.

The Election Commission has previously argued that these developmental allocations are not a form of bribery.

Meanwhile, MCA Youth chief Liow Tiong Lai, who accompanied Arif Shah, said the voters should support the BN candidate because the latter will be able to the serve the rakyat.

"If you elect Anwar, he will just treat this as a stepping stone (to overthrow the BN government) but the locals want to see real development in the constituency," said Liow, who is also the health minister.

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