

**Hanafi takes it easy in Permatang Pauh**  
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**Beh Lih Yi**

Hanafi Hamat, the third candidate in the three-cornered battle for Permatang Pauh, is taking it easy even though high-profile rivals Anwar Ibrahim and Arif Shah Omar Shah have locked themselves into one of the dirtiest and toughest by-election fights ever.  
MCPX

Hanafi, who heads the little-known Islamic party Angkatan Insan Keadilan Malaysia (Akim), is not even in town.

permatang pauh by election nomination day 160808 11 hanafi hamat akim candidate"I am still preparing my campaigning materials like flags and banners. My opponents can have their 'big' campaign, we can have our slow campaign," he told Malaysiakini in a phone interview when contacted from Tanah Merah last night.

The 61-year old, tanned-skinned father of 12 returned home to Tanah Merah, Kelantan shortly after filing his nomination on Saturday.

He said some 200 Akim election workers had been mobilised to help prepare campaign materials and he was now eyeing Thursday to launch his bid for the hearts and minds of the Permatang Pauh voters.

With polling date due the following Tuesday on Aug 26, that leaves the jubah and serban-clad Hanafi just about five days in which to share his vision and brand of politics with constituents there.

There are 58,459 eligible voters in Permatang Pauh, a sprawling semi-urban town in northern Penang state, where green padi fields alternate with grey industrial parks populated by big electronic multinationals.

**Knows he won't win**

Hanafi already knows he has zero chance of winning. Even as a 'spoiler' - someone who takes away votes from other candidates thereby reducing their chances - he is unlikely to make much impact.

In fact, Hanafi expects to lose the RM15,000 deposit paid to the Election Commission to register his candidacy. Under Malaysian rules, a candidate will lose his deposit if he receives less than one-eighth of the votes cast.

"We have posted the deposit and we are not thinking of getting it back," he said.

permatang pauh by election candiadtes anwar and arif shah hanafi hamat"Akim will not win but Permatang Pauh will be the place for us to set our footing in order for us to go on a nationwide scale to bring a correct message to the people," Hanafi added. "We want to be the saviour of the people."

Hanafi said his party's manifesto will be based on national issues focusing on security and

national unity.

"We want to let the voters know that we are different from PKR or BN as we want to be there to promote issues of security and we are not like those leaders who want to divide the people," he said.

The Permatang Pauh parliamentary seat fell vacant after PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail vacated it to pave the way for her husband and opposition icon Anwar Ibrahim to re-enter Parliament.

Anwar, the de facto leader of the Pakatan Rakyat opposition alliance, is pitted against Arif Shah Omar Shah, the affable Mandarin-speaking candidate for the Barisan Nasional ruling coalition.

### **A publicity victory for Akim**

While both Hanafi's high-powered rivals have been slugging it out, holding nightly ceramahs and going door-to-door to convince voters, Hanafi says his style is different.

He rejected claims that he was a candidate sponsored by one or other of his two opponents to be a 'spoiler'.

hanafi hamat akim permatang pauh by election 180808 01 "People can make all sorts of claims. Some said I'm sponsored by PAS, some said I'm sponsored by BN, it is not right. Akim was founded long time ago, it's not the first time we're contesting," he stressed.

Akim, which claims to have 15,000 members, was founded by Hanafi - a former member of PAS - which he left together with a group of disgruntled leaders in 1995.

Its principle of governance is similar to the PAS Islamic agenda

In 1990, Hanafi contested as an independent candidate for the Tanah Merah state assembly seat, but did not win.

Whether he wins or loses at Permatang Pauh is irrelevant for Hanafi. As far as he is concerned, he has already scored big.

With just RM15,000 he has managed to buy nationwide publicity for himself and his party.

But for how long will they be remembered is the challenge that remains for the slim, slightly gangly Hanafi who kept murmuring 'Allahuakhbar' (God is great) when approached by reporters on nomination day.