

Arif eyes a slim win
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Barisan Nasional candidate Arif Shah Omar Shah today refuted suggestions that his campaign machinery was a disaster and expressed quiet confidence of slim win.
MCPX

After a simple home-coming party for national shuttler Lee Chong Wei this afternoon, the Permatang Pauh candidate said that intelligence reports on the situation were encouraging.

permatang pauh badminton 200808 mingling with folksWhile a big win was never on the books, Arif Shah said that a slim victory was now within grasp.

"If all the BN components mobilise their members and their members' families, we are confident of getting 20,000 votes," said the 52-year-old.

"And if we were to put in a bit more effort during our campaign over the next few days, I'm sure we can hit 28,000 votes."

If the total of Umno and its partners' members are taken into account, the target is possible, he added.

But he was also quick to point out that if there was any victory at all, the margin would be very slim.

permatang pauh 2008 results for state and state seats 140808Permatang Pauh, which houses three state seats, has 57,969 registered voters. The electorate consists of 68 percent Malay, 24 percent Chinese and six percent Indians.

During the March 8 general election, PKR chief Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail won with a majority of 13,388 votes after garnering 30,338 votes.

Her opponent Pirdaus Ismail (Umno) only managed to pick up 16,950 votes.

Voter turnout then was estimated at around 80 percent. And with polling slotted for a working day (Aug 26), a much lower turnout is expected this time around.

If Arif Shah can improve his position by another 30 percent, a slim victory is possible.

It's all a tactic

As to suggestions that his campaign machinery was sluggish compared to PKR Anwar Ibrahim's, Arif Shah said it was a strategy

"We've divided our tasks as there are many different representatives from different states.

"I'm only concentrating on the areas which I feel necessary. I'm also focusing on matters concerning the candidates.

As for national issues, Arif Shah said that they are left for the national leaders like the prime minister and his deputy to answer.

The multi-lingual Seberang Jaya assemblyman explained that it is part of BN's strategy to appear as the underdog and be seen as weak.

permatang pauh badminton 200808 on stageMeanwhile, two ministers - Liow Tiong Lai (Health) and Ismail Sabri Yaacob (Sports) - and Lee's coach Misbun Sidek were there to present the Beijing Olympics silver medalists to the villagers of Kampung Berapit.

Taking a quick opportunity to campaign for Arif Shah, Ismail said that Lee's success proved that the current federal government did not practise racial discrimination.

"We've the best formula for success in this country. Although, the player is Chinese and the coach is Malay, when Lee qualified for the final, they hugged each other as if they were brothers," said Ismail.

"Under the current government there is no discrimination at all. More so, if you look at the badminton team which is full of Chinese."

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