

Hanafi : I can steal Permatang Pauh
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Little-known third candidate Hanafi Hamat has finally arrived to kick-start his belated Permatang Pauh by-election campaign, boldly predicting that he can steal the seat from right under the noses of his more high-profile rivals.

"I am confident of winning because many voters are fed up with both Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Rakyat's hostile politics and mud-slinging.

hanafi hamat akim independent candidate permatang pauh 210808 04 "I can beat both opponents," said Hanafi, the president of the little known Islamic-based Angkatan Keadilan Insan Malaysia (Akim) or Malaysia People's Justice Party.

Hanafi almost went unnoticed on nomination day last Saturday when he walked quietly into the nomination centre in Tuanku Bainun Teachers College to file his papers, turning the battle for Permatang Pauh into a three-cornered fight.

His chances are widely regarded as slim but the soft-spoken Kelantanese remains unfazed in facing his more illustrious opponents, PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim, and BN's Seberang Jaya state assemblyperson Arif Shah Omar Shah in this high-stakes by-election.

The parliamentary seat was left vacant by PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, to pave way for her husband Anwar to re-enter parliament.

Hanafi, 61, a real estate agent from Tanah Merah in Kelantan said he has received overwhelming support from Permatang Pauh folk since he arrived to start his campaigning Wednesday morning.

He said a well-wisher had even provided him with free accommodation in a vacant house in Taman Pauh, Seberang Jaya for the duration of the campaign period.

A handful of volunteers also helped him set up a makeshift operations centre near the Bukit Tengah roundabout last night.

Hanafi is married to Zainab Semam, 55, and has 12 children – eight sons and four daughters - aged between 12 and 35.

When asked if he intend to have more children, he said: "Cukuplah." (Enough)

The perfect spoiler?

Hanafi said Akim was offering an alternative political party to the people of Permatang Pauh, with an ideology emphasising "unity, equality and humanity", admitting that his party was using the by-election as a platform to project the party into the mainstream political limelight.

"We are optimistic that the Akim political brand will be well-received by all Malaysians across racial and religious boundaries after this by-election," said Hanafi, who contested and

lost as an independent candidate for the Tanah Merah state assembly seat in 1990.

Akim was formed by a splinter group from PAS in Kelantan in 1995, with Musa Salleh as its first president.

permatang pauh by election nomination day 160808 11 hanafi hamat akim candidate Hanafi, who took over the helm following Musa's death in 2002, said Akim was formed in protest against PAS' extreme politics. However, when asked to elaborate, he declined to do so. It is believed the party has the same Islamic agenda as PAS.

Since its formation, the party has fielded several candidates in Kelantan during general elections, but has never won.

Hanafi said he would be organising more door-to-door campaigns and small kopitiam (coffee shop) meetings in Permatang Pauh in next five days to put across Akim's stand on national issues, such as security, inflation, political instability, national unity and harmony and economic prosperity.

Political observers feel Hanafi joined the electoral battle to give his more high profile rivals a run for their money, clip some of their votes and become a perfect spoiler.

"Against all odds, I am confident of accumulating many votes," Hanafi said.

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