

**Najib optimistic of a bigger win**  
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Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said that he was "reasonably optimistic" that the Barisan Nasional would do better in the Kuala Terengganu polls than the last general election.

However he stressed that the coalition did not want to be over confident in going to the polls in Jan 17, adding that its candidate Wan Ahmad Farid was a capable person to be the people's representative.

Wan Ahmad (with Najib in photo) himself said that the hard work had just started for him as he would be going all out to woo the voters.

In the last general election, BN's Razali Ismail won the seat with a 628-vote majority in a three-cornered fight. He however died unexpectedly on Nov 28, necessitating this by-election.

Three candidates filed their nominations today with Wan Ahmad pitting against PAS' Mohd Abdul Wahid Endut and independent candidate Azharudin Mamat for the parliamentary seat.

Talking to reporters after the nomination process, Najib, who is heading the BN campaign for the by-election, said that Wan Farid is the right person to serve the people in Kuala Terengganu.

"However, we don't want to be too confident as we don't have a crystal ball. But we believe that we will win well. That is our target and we will do our best to achieve it," he said.

He also added that the by-election was not a referendum on either himself or the prime minister - Najib will be replacing Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in March.

"This by-election is for the people to choose their representative. This should be the consideration for the people," he added.

**BN priority is on rakyat**

He added that BN would be tackling issues pertaining to the people, on what can be done for them and what has been done for them.

"Everything done by the BN is for the rakyat. We put our priority on them.

"Possibly in this by-election, the focus will be on local issues. But if they raise national issues, BN is prepared to answer them," he added.

The opposition is expected to raise issues such as the various mega projects - from Monsoon Cup to the Crystal Mosque, and on the recent talk of Sime Darby taking over the National Heart Institute as part of their election campaign.

Najib also added that it was the BN candidate who would get things done, alluding to the

fact that Wan Ahmad is to be reappointed deputy home minister if he wins the by-election.

Both Najib and Wan Ahmad refused to comment on remarks by former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad that the candidate is a proxy for Abdullah.

Wan Ahmad said he is interested in concentrating in getting the voters to vote for him and would not comment on anything else.

### **Altantuya not an issue at all**

Najib was also asked if he thought the opposition would raise the Altantuya issue during the campaign, to which he said: "This shows they are bankrupt of issues."

"This issue has no relevance on this by-election at all," he added.

The opposition in the past had linked Najib with the murder of Mongolian national Altantuya Shaariibuu. Yesterday five PKR Youth members were arrested by the police for putting up Altantuya posters.

The DPM has repeatedly denied any involvement or of ever knowing or meeting the Mongolian.

Najib also dismissed claims that candidates for the Umno polls would be taking advantage to seek support during this by-election campaign.

He said that each Umno candidate on duty in Kuala Terengganu would be given a specific task.

"They are not allowed to loiter about but have to discharge their duty at certain places which have been determined," he said.

### **Chinese voters unaffected by hudud issue**

Meanwhile, PAS' Mohd Abdul Wahid was also equally confident of winning.

"I am ready to be the MP for this area," he told reporters.

He said that being a state assemblyperson for a seat - Wakaf Mempelam - under the Kuala Terengganu parliamentary constituency will not reduce his chances at all [see chart].

He was also equally confident that he would be able to garner the Chinese votes.

"I don't think the Chinese voters are affected by the hudud controversy," he said.

kuala terengganu by election nomination day 060109 pakatan leaders 2He was referring to a recent controversy which arose after PAS leaders affirmed their stand to implement hudud laws if they come to power at federal level.

Mohd Abdul Wahid also said he would not engage in any personal attacks and does not think that the independent candidate would be able to split the votes to his (Mohd Abdul Wahid's) disadvantage.

The independent candidate Azharudin also said that he was not in the contest to split the votes, adding that he was running for the seat "to help the poor people".

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