

**By-election: Young lawyer to lead BN charge**  
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Permatang Pauh Umno division secretary Rohaizat Othman (*below*), a 38-year-old lawyer, is Barisan Nasional's candidate for the upcoming Permatang Pasir by-election in Penang.

This was announced by BN deputy president Muhyiddin Yassin during a function attended by about 1,000 party supporters at Bukit Merah.

During his speech, Muhyiddin urged voters to support BN to ensure economic development and pledged to 'adopt' Permatang Pasir as a '*anak emas*' (golden child).

He also slammed the Pakatan Rakyat Penang government over its handling of the Kampung Buah Pala episode and criticised PAS spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat over religious issues.

Meanwhile, PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang announced Penang PAS commissioner Mohd Salleh Man as the party's candidate for the by-election during a ceramah in Penang tonight. The Permatang Pasir seat fell vacant following the death of three-term assemblyperson Mohd Hamdan Abdul Rahman who succumbed to heart illness on July 31.

Nominations have been fixed for next Monday, while polling will be on Aug 25. After the announcement, Rohaizat instantly declared himself as the [underdog](#) going into the battle in a PAS stronghold.

Married with one son, 38-year-old Rohaizat is a law graduate from the International Islamic University (UIA).

He believes he has a chance to recapture the seat provided everyone from BN supports him.

"It has been PAS fortress-like seat for the past three general elections. We will have to work hard to recapture it," he told journalists.

**'Can win by 65 votes'**

On Wednesday, *Malaysiakini* [forecast](#) Rohaizat as the most likely candidate for the contest.

The by-election will be the eight in the country since last general election.

In the previous seven contests, Pakatan Rakyat has won six against BN's one.

Referring to Marek Urai by-election narrow defeat by 65 votes to Umno, Muhyiddin said the slim margin of victory for PAS in its stronghold in Kelantan showed that "the people are coming back to Umno and BN".

"If we can lose by only 65 votes in Manek Urai, we should win by at least 65 wins in Permatang Pasir.

"If we win, we will adopt the constituency as our golden child. We will bring about all types of development to ensure that Permatang Pasir growth would be on par with other developed rural areas," said the deputy prime minister.

Muhyiddin also called on all BN leaders and members, especially from Permatang Pauh Umno, to support Rohaizat's candidacy to ensure the victory for BN.

"I know Permatang Pauh Umno division has many potential candidates but we can only choose one. Everyone should work hard to ensure BN wins," Muhyiddin said.

### **Buah Pala to become a hot issue**

Permatang Pasir - one of three state seats in the Permatang Pauh parliamentary constituency - is the sole PAS seat in Penang.

Hamdan won it with a majority of 5,433 votes last year, beating Umno's Ahmad Sahar Shuib in 2008.

In the Permatang Pauh by-election in August last year, Seberang Jaya assemblyperson Arif Shah Omar Shah of Umno lost to PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim by a majority 15,671.

Arif Shah had garnered slightly more than 4,000 votes in Permatang Pasir, which was lower than Ahmad Sahar's tally.

The constituency has 20,290 voters and one postal vote, with 72.36 percent of the electorate being Malays, 25.85 percent Chinese, 1.63 percent Indians and 0.16 percent others. It has 300 new voters.

Muhyiddin also took a swipe at the DAP state government for perceived incompetence in handling and resolving the Kampung Buah Pala crisis.

"The crisis is prolonging because the state government is not competent enough to resolve it. It shows the state government lack administrative experience to tackle such issue.

"But BN has the expertise and experience to resolve such a crisis," he said, hinting that the village issue could become a campaign topic in BN's camp during the by-election.

Among those present were BN state chairperson Koh Tsu Koon, Umno vice-president Ahmad Zahidi Hamid, Umno youth leader Khairy Jamaluddin, MCA vice-president Liow Tiong Lai, BN secretary-general Tengku Adnan Mansor and Permatang Pauh division chief Abdul Jalil Majid.

Khairy said Rohaizat's youthful, religious and professional backgrounds propelled him as the ideal candidate for the pre-dominantly rural seats.

Pointing out that 40 percent of Permatang Pasir voters were youth, he said the national Umno and BN youth machinery will be mobilised to garner the majority support from them.

### **Bar Council action struck off**

Meanwhile, Rohaizat said the internal disciplinary action initiated by Bar Council on him on an allegation of unprofessional conduct had been struck off in March 2008.

"The allegation is no more an issue now," he said.

Rohaizat's name has appeared on the Bar Council report on disciplinary orders for January - March 2008.

The report revealed the case against Rohaizat had been initiated under Legal Profession Act 1986 and was struck off on March 7, a day before the last general election.

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