

**Battle lines drawn: Galas and Batu Sapi all set for polls**  
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KUALA LUMPUR - The nominations for the Batu Sapi parliamentary by-election in Sabah and Galas by-election in Kelantan closed at 10am Tuesday with three candidates having submitted their papers in Batu Sapi and two in Galas.

In Sandakan, those who submitted their papers for the Batu Sapi by-election were Barisan Nasional's Linda Tsen Thau Lin, Sabah Progressive Party's Yong Teck Lee and Parti Keadilan Rakyat's Ansari Abdullah.

Ansari was the first to hand in his papers at the nomination centre at the Sandakan Community Centre at 9.02am, followed by Yong at 9.05am and a minute later by Tsen.

In Gua Musang, the candidates who submitted their papers for the Galas by-election were Abdul Aziz Yusoff of BN and Dr Zulkefli Mohamad of PAS.

An hour of objection period was observed before the returning officers of both areas announced the candidates at the close of the objection period at 11am.

The Galas by-election on Nov 4 will see a straight fight between Abdul Aziz and Dr Zulkefli.

Returning officer Wan Mustapha Wan Abdul Hamid announced their candidacies at 11am outside the nomination centre at Gua Musang Land and District Office.

Abdul Aziz, 49, was the first to hand in his nomination papers at 9.05am followed by Dr Zulkefli, 44, at 9.30am.

Akim president Hanafi Mamat, who had previously indicated that he might contest Galas, was nowhere to be seen.

The nomination process went on smoothly with any untoward incidents despite the presence of thousands of supporters.

Abdul Aziz arrived at the nomination centre at 9.05am accompanied by Umno secretary-general Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, MCA vice-president Dr Ng Yen Yen and Wanita Umno chief Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

Also accompanying him were Umno vice-president Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Umno Supreme Council member who is Information Communication and Culture Minister Dr Rais Yatim, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Jamil Khir Baharom, Kelantan Umno liaison chief Mustapa Mohamed and Gua Musang MP Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

PAS candidate Dr Zulkefli arrived at 9.30am accompanied by PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang, his deputy Nasharuddin Mat Isa, vice-president Mahfuz Omar, Selangor Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim and Parti Keadilan Rakyat vice-president Azmin Ali.

Supporters gathered along the road into the nomination centre as early as 7.30am, carrying party flags and banners, to support their respective candidates.

The by-election is called following the death of incumbent Chek Hashim Sulaima, 46, of PAS, on Sept 27.

There are 11,553 voters in Galas comprising 7,125 Malay voters, 2,317 Chinese, 185 Indians, 10 members of the Siamese community and 1,889 Orang Asli.

This is the second by-election in Kelantan after the 2008 by-election. The first was the Manik Urai by-election in July last year.

Meanwhile, the MIC has pledged to deliver the Indian votes to BN in Galas. MIC vice-president Dr S Subramaniam said although their number was small, they remained important because "every vote counts."

Subramaniam, who is Human Resources Minister, said the party's machinery had been deployed to meet the voters and help the BN's campaign.

"We have identified problem faced by the community here," he told reporters after meeting the Indian community in Galas Monday night.

Meanwhile in Sandakan, the Batu Sapi by-election will see a three-cornered fight involving BN's Linda Tsen of Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS), SAPP president Yong, who is a former Sabah chief minister, and PKR Tuaran division chief and prominent lawyer Ansari.

The list of candidates was announced by returning officer Mohamad Hamsan Awang Supain, who is also the Sandakan Municipal Council secretary, at the nomination centre, Sandakan Community Hall.

Mohamad Hamsan accepted the papers of all three candidates as there were no issues raised during the one-hour objection period.

About one thousand supporters from all parties gathered in this coastal town since sunrise before going to the nomination centre. They were shouting slogans but maintained discipline.

Earlier, Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin and Chief Minister Musa Aman led the BN supporters and Tsen to the nomination centre.

Also present were PBS president Joseph Pairin Kitingan, MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek, MIC president S. Samy Vellu, Gerakan president Dr Koh Tsu Koon, PPP president M. Kayveas and other representatives of BN component parties.

The PKR camp was led by its president Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, DAP deputy chairman Dr Tan Seng Giaw and PAS secretary-general Mustafa Ali, while Yong, the SAPP candidate, led a small group of supporters.

Tsen, when later approached by reporters, pledged that if she is chosen, she would work hard and do her best to carry on the good work of BN.

Yong, meanwhile, praised the Election Commission for handling the nomination process smoothly. "We thank the Election Commission and its officers for all the preparations made. There were no problems and no objections.

"As for our campaign, we will highlight issues such as unemployment, poverty, land, rising

cost of goods and empty promises made (by the government)...We will change all that to return honour and autonomy to the people of Sabah through Batu Sapi," he said.

Ansari said the Batu Sapi contest was a chance for PKR to have a member of parliament from Sabah, adding that his campaign would also focus on the issue of poverty of the Bumiputeras here.

He also claimed that SAPP is "not a real opposition party, but an 'independent' party".

The Batu Sapi parliamentary seat fell vacant following the death of its incumbent and two-term MP, Edmund Chong, in a road accident on Oct 9.

Chong won the seat in the 2008 general election by a 3,708-vote majority, defeating independent candidate Dr Chung Kong Wing.

Chong polled 9,479 votes against Dr Chung's 5,771. He won the same seat in the 2004 general election unopposed.

Batu Sapi has 25,582 voters, of whom 24,047 are ordinary voters and 1,535 postal voters. Muslim Bumiputeras comprise 15,099 or 59.02 per cent of the voters, non-Muslim Bumiputeras 689 (2.69 per cent), Chinese 9,737 (38.06 per cent) and others, 57 (0.22 per cent). - *Bernama*

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