

**A friendly match**  
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COMMENT The by-election in Galas is an unusual one. Can you label it as just another by-election?

Ku Li said it was going to be a friendly match, and if BN won the match, it would be excellent. But even if it lost the match, it wouldn't be too bad either. Anyway, Ku Li has not said he would defend Galas with all his prestige, or... blood.

And since it is going to be a friendly match, friendship should come before the contest itself. Period.

Even if the game is lost, we should at least take the defeat in stride.

The important thing is that Ku Li said Galas was going to be a gentlemen's fight and no one should engage in any dirty trick.

He did not enter the nomination centre on the nomination day, which should have been a most opportune time for show of spirit and force.

But, was BN going to show that off with Ku Li nowhere in sight?

Even his Pakatan friends such as Nik Aziz were looking for him, probably to have some kind of friendly chat of old acquaintances.

It was like a party, and everyone was expecting the most anticipated VVIP. Without him the party would lose half its shine.

On such an occasion, he had no foes but friends.

On day two of campaigning, he was seen sipping Chinese tea with some Ah Pek at a coffee shop, totally relaxed and unaggressive. Did we call that election campaigning?

Such a campaigning style will only put the professional campaigners at a complete loss.

No smearing of rival candidate, no destroying of rival banners and flags, no exchange of words, no extremist discourse, no mammoth mobilisation of manpower... Oh dear, they will go nuts very soon!

It has been said that Ku Li has barred the Perkasa people from coming to Galas for fear that they would contaminate the pristine by-election.

Ku Li seems to be telling them: "This is my place. Please play by my rules. Don't create havoc!"

His way is obviously not the way of Umno, which has just convened the general assembly and whose commander-in-chief has just sworn to grab both Galas and Batu Sapi on the other side of the South China Sea.

Ku Li was chosen as the campaign director mainly for its local influences as well as tying

him to Umno's side so that he would not secretly collaborate with PAS.

Ku Li's unbecoming calmness may have already sent many hysterical.

The veteran fighter has seen battles ten time more powerful and momentous than the one in Galas. While he hopes the battle could be won, so that his political life in Umno can be further prolonged, he will never want to sacrifice his friendship with PAS at the expense of a by-election.

He understands better than anyone else that his political stage is more than just Umno, but includes also the vast space that is overlapped by the two major political camps in the country.

His supporters have come out with the manifesto "Ambo nok parti Kuli" (We want Ku Li's party), not the outright Umno or BN banner.

The by-election is momentary. Whether the game is won or lost, Ku Li's political career still needs to go on beyond the election. In a similar manner, inter-party competition is also momentary, and what comes more important than that is the country's democratic process.

Such gently fought friendly match might, who knows, constitute a positive model for future political competition in Malaysia. - *mysinchew.com*

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