

Debate runaround turns out to be political stunt
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SANDAKAN - Two debates scheduled to take place here Sunday never materialised and turned out to be just a political stunt.

The first was to have involved one of the three candidates for the Batu Sapi by-election, Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) president Yong Teck Lee (left), and Sabah Chief Minister Musa Aman.

The other, organised by another candidate, Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) candidate Ansari Abdullah, was to have involved him, Yong and Barisan Nasional (BN) candidate Linda Tsen Thau Lin.

Both Yong and Ansari tried to score points by calling for a debate - despite having been told in advance that their intended debator would not take part.

Yong even went as far as to publish a full-page advertisement in local dailies to inform the public of Sunday's debate at Dewan Hakka.

Musa had already said it was pointless to debate with Yong, while Yong, a former chief minister, brushed aside Ansari's invitation for a debate at Sunbay Hotel.

Yong had said he preferred to debate with Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, instead of Ansari.

Earlier, Tsen had also turned down Ansari's invitation for a debate, according to Bernama.

Why organise a debate when those invited to debate had already said they were not keen?

Political analysts said such strategy was normal to score as many points as they could, to project a picture that their opponents are scared to answer points raised by their opponents.

That explains why Yong immediately turned the supposedly one-sided debate into a political ceramah at Dewan Hakka here after the supposed one-hour debate time expired.

Ansari unexpectedly turned up at Yong's debate at Dewan Hakka although he was not invited, but left the hall after being told that "the debate was called off at 1pm due to a no-show by Musa".

Ansari returned to the Sunbay Hotel where he was to hold "a separate debate with Yong and Tsen" but it turned out to be a political speech by Anwar.

Later, Yong sent a short message service to the media, stating that Ansari got his time wrong, and that PKR booked the same hall at 7pm, and not 1pm. - Bernama

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