

Newspaper	THE STAR
Date	24 JULY 2017

'I dare Dr M to contest in Pekan'

The Star - 24/7/2017 pg. 12

Hishammuddin challenges former PM's bold 'aspiration'

LIPIS: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's "aspiration" to stand against the Prime Minister in Pekan in the next general election has been dismissed as a populist statement.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the statement was deliberately issued when the Umno divisions were holding their meetings so as to disturb the focus of party members.

"It's a populist statement. I challenge him to contest in Pekan, if he dares to," he said adding that he and the rest of the Barisan Nasional leadership would help to defend the seat currently held by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He was speaking at a press conference after opening the Cameron Highlands Umno division meeting at Sungai Koyan, here yesterday.

Hishammuddin said this when asked to comment on the Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia president's aspiration to contest in Pekan if there was no suitable candidate.

Commenting on PKR vice-president Rafizi Ramli's statement that the current support of the Malay voters for Pakatan Harapan was found to be more than for Barisan, he said such a statement coming from the PKR leader was nothing new.

"Rafizi always made various state-

ments, but when his statement is answered he would move the goal post. He deliberately throws out issues to see our reactions.

"For me, the statement is only an assumption that is deliberately raised in anticipation of the next general election," he said.

On the wishes of the division's delegates who wanted a representative from Umno to replace MIC to contest as the Barisan candidate in Cameron Highlands in the next general election, Hishammuddin said the proposal would be taken to the top leadership level for discussion.

However, he said, without the support of all Barisan component

parties, the coalition would not be able to win in multi-racial areas.

Cameron Highlands Umno division chief Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail, in his speech earlier, said 39 out of 40 branches in the division wanted an Umno candidate to contest in the Cameron Highlands parliamentary constituency.

He said this was based on the number of Malay and orang asli voters who represent 55% of the electorate and Barisan's candidate from MIC Datuk Seri G Palanivel's victory in the last general election, was assisted by a high majority in the Jelai state seat after Barisan lost in Tanah Rata. — Bernama