

Ismail Sabri: Set aside differences

Umno stands to match PN in number of state seats should they win

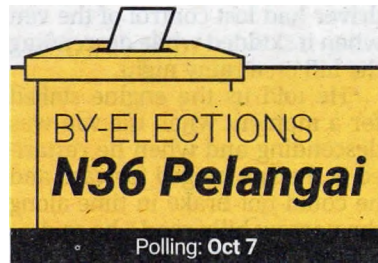
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KUALA LUMPUR: Umno supporters in Pelangai were urged to put aside their disagreements and rally behind the party in the by-election, said senior leader Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

This is after reports emerged that some grassroots members were upset over Umno's choice to field its Bentong division committee member Datuk Amizar Abu Adam in the Oct 7 polls.

"It's important that all Umno members support our Pelangai by-election candidate because if he loses it will further tarnish the party's image," said Ismail Sabri, a former prime minister and vice-president in Umno who is based in Pahang.

"It is important to remember



that the party is more important than the individual candidate contesting in the election," he told reporters after attending the International Symposium on the Malay Language 2023.

It was reported that Bentong Umno Youth member Haslihelmy DM Zulhasli is contesting as an Independent candidate in the by-election as a sign of protest against Umno's decision to field Amizar.

Pelangai is one of four state seats in the Bentong parliamentary seat.

Amizar will be contesting under the Barisan Nasional banner, the coalition which Umno leads.

Ismail Sabri said Umno's image has already been badly hurt by its defeats in the recent six state elections.

In the Aug 12 polls, the party only won 19 out of the 108 seats it contested.

"We have to win in Pelangai because if we lose, we will have only 16 state seats compared to Perikatan Nasional's 18 state seats if they win.

"If we win, we will have an equal number of state seats with Perikatan," he said.

He added that the party should not be too proud with the unity government pact's recent win in

the Pulau and Simpang Jeram by-elections, as Umno's image among the Malays continues to worsen.

"We should look seriously at why Malays are not voting for Umno and are attracted to Perikatan.

"Umno is a Malay party which should be attracting Malay voters and we need to have a post-mortem to discuss this issue soon," he said.

The Pelangai state by-election is set to be a three-cornered fight between Amizar, Haslihelmy and Kasim Samat of Perikatan.

The by-election was called following the death of its incumbent Datuk Seri Johari Harun, 53, in a plane crash in Shah Alam, Selangor on Aug 17.

The Election Commission has set polling day on Oct 7 while

early voting will be on Oct 3.

Meanwhile, when asked whether former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad can attract foreign investors as the new adviser for the four Perikatan-controlled states, Ismail Sabri said the Federal Government will continue to promote Perikatan-led states.

"While I was prime minister, we would always promote the country holistically as there were some investors who were interested in Kelantan, Penang and other Opposition states," he said, referring to Perikatan states of Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu and Perlis.

"We would treat all states equally and without bias as any foreign investment will benefit the country as a whole," he added.