

BN Needs To Work Hard To Recapture Sungai Petani
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SUNGAI PETANI (Bernama) -- Sungai Petani, one of the most developed towns in the rice bowl state of Kedah, is home to all races including the Iban and Orang Asli.

The Sungai Petani parliamentary constituency is also unique because its residents are divided into urban, suburban and rural areas while its socio economic status can be categorised as rich, moderate and poor.

This means that a representative of the people, be it parliamentary or state seat, has to be someone who resides in the area and is able to serve the community.

There will be a four-cornered fight for the Sungai Petani parliamentary seat, while in the three state seats, Pantai Merdeka and Bakar Arang will see a three-cornered fight, in Sidam the contest will be five-cornered which will not be an easy feat for Barisan Nasional (BN).

Local political observers predict a challenging journey for BN and hard work to achieve victory.

"The background of voters from the three categories require a people's representative who is close to the heart, easy to contact and meet. Education is not a top factor.

"BN may fail to get all four seats if they feel that the opposition poses no threats, even if they are only Independent candidates," said a political observer met by Bernama, here Sunday night.

Sungai Petani incumbent Datuk Johari Abdul from PKR, when met, said he does not know the BN candidate Dr Syamsul Anuar Che Mey.

Two other candidates are Ong Wei Sin (Independent) and Suhaimi Hashim (Kita). Wei Sin was former Kedah MCA Youth deputy chief and Sungai Petani MCA Youth chief.

In the Pantai Merdeka state constituency, Sungai Petani Umno division chief Ali Yahya faces an obstacle from his former committee member Mohd Yusuf Lazim, who is contesting on an Independent ticket, to topple incumbent Abdullah Jusoh (PAS).

However, Ali was confident that support for Mohd Yusuf was not bad in view of the commitment of the division's committee, including Wanita and Puteri Umno, and hoped that there would be no split in the BN votes.

In 2008, Bakar Arang was won by a PKR candidate, but this time the three candidates Lee Yean Wang (BN), Ooi Tze Min (PKR) and Ong Kah Soon (Independent) would contest for the first time.

"Hopes to win back Bakar Arang are brighter than Pantai Merdeka, while things are hard to predict in Sidam because the three Independent candidates have their own influence," he added.

A Sungai Petani Umno veteran, who declined to be named, said Ooi Beng Kooi (Bebas) was formerly part of the Sungai Petani Gerakan committee, while former Kedah PKR Youth chief

and Kedah Kita leader Zamil Ibrahim is also contesting on an Independent ticket.

In the Sidam state constituency, BN candidate Bee Sieong Heng faces Robert Ling Kui Ee (PKR), Uh Chorong Von (Kita) and Independent candidate Tan Hock Huat.

Out of the total of 25,183 voters in Sidam, 40.5 per cent are Chinese, Malays (37.6 per cent), Indians (21 per cent) and others (0.9 per cent).

Zamil, when met, said he was contesting to protect the interests of the Malays in Sidam since the seat had been given to Gerakan for some time.

"I think I have an advantage over other candidates. Besides support from friends here, the protest vote may also be on my side," he added.

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