

PSM gets Kota Damansara, PAS to give support
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By Mohd Farhan Darwis

KUALA LUMPUR, April 27 — The overlapping contest for the Kota Damansara state seat was resolved today when PAS withdrew its candidate in favour of PSM chairman Dr Nasir Hashim, who is contesting on a PKR ticket.

PAS secretary-general Datuk Mustafa Ali told reporters today the Islamist party has decided to stick to the status quo in the seat that Nasir won in Election 2008.

"I want to announce that after negotiations, the status quo remains for the Kota Damansara state seat before Nomination Day which is it is allocated to PKR," Mustafa (picture) told a press conference at the PAS headquarters here.

He said PAS has informed the Election Commission (EC) about the withdrawal of its candidate on April 23 and has directed its machinery to ensure victory for the PKR candidate.

Nasir had run in PKR's colours and won Kota Damansara in the 12th general election by a 1,075-vote margin against Barisan Nasional's (BN) Zein Isma Ismail.

This time, he will up against four others — BN's Halimaton Saadiah Bohan and three independent candidates, Edroos Abdullah, A. Suppiah and Halmi Omar.

The squabble between PSM and PR was said to be caused by PAS's move to field its candidate Ridzuan Ismail in the same seat.

The socialist party, which is not part of the PR pact, had also tussled over the Semenyih state seat in Selangor and Jelapang in Perak.

Mustafa said all the overlap in seven seats between PAS and PKR has also been resolved, with the Islamist party ceding four to its Pakatan Rakyat (PR) partner.

"Three state seats in Terengganu: Kota Putera, Seberang Takir and Bukit Besi have been given to PAS.

"While three more seats that is DUN Panti in Johor, Sungai Acheh in Penang, and the Labuan parliamentary seat will be handed over to PKR," he said, adding the decision had been made last night.

Election 2013 is gearing up to be the toughest battle yet with a record number of politicians breaking ties with their parties and going rogue to run as independents.

At the close of nominations on April 20, the EC had confirmed a total of 579 candidates for the 222 parliamentary seats, and 1,320 candidates for the 505 state seats.

In 2008, 36 independent candidates contested the federal seats, while 66 contested the state seats.

Some 13.3 million voters, including 5,200 abroad, are eligible to cast their ballots in Election

2013 to elect their lawmakers in 12 states. Sarawak already held its state election in 2011.

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