

Hung State Assembly In Terengganu Unlikely, Say Politicians
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KUALA LUMPUR, June 28 (Bernama) -- Will a hung state assembly emerge in Terengganu with an upcoming by-election that has the possibility of splitting the 32-seat legislature down the middle?

Unlikely, according to feedback from politicians on both sides of the divide.

The death of Kuala Besut assemblyman Dr A. Rahman Mokhtar of the Barisan Nasional (BN) has forced a by-election in Terengganu where the ruling BN now has 16 of the 17 seats it won in the May 5 general election and Pakatan Rakyat has 15 (PAS 14 and PKR, one).

An opposition victory in the by-election, which has to be held before Aug 27, could split the seats 16-16.

It is generally believed that this hung state assembly could result in a fresh election being called, but politicians interviewed said this should not necessarily be so.

Terengganu MCA chief and former state executive councillor Datuk Toh Chin Yaw told Bernama the casting vote by the speaker of the assembly, a post now held by Mohd Zubir Embong, would keep the BN in power in the state.

"The chair of any meeting has the casting vote. If voting is tied, under certain regulation, the chair (speaker) will exercise his casting vote," he said.

If the number of seats are tied at 16-16, the BN government would get that one majority from the speaker's casting vote.

PKR vice-president Tian Chua shared the opinion, saying that even if PAS managed to capture the Kuala Besut seat in the by-election and there was a tie at 16-16, a fresh election would not have to be called.

"Whether the speaker is an assemblyman or not, the principle is that the chair has the casting vote when the situation is tied. The speaker will cast his vote and the BN will continue to rule," he told Bernama.

He said a change of government could only happen only if there were defections of assemblymen from the ruling party.

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