

'Ramadan Politics' In Kuala Besut By-Election
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KUALA BESUT, July 14 (Bernama) -- The Kuala Besut state by-election serves as a test of maturity for the Barisan Nasional (BN) and PAS in terms of campaigning by showing respect to the Ramadan fasting month, say political analysts.

Universiti Utara Malaysia Political and International Studies lecturer, Md Shukri Shuib said it was important for both parties to practise 'Ramadan politics' in order to prove that Malaysia, as an Islamic country, could respect the holy month and maintain unity at the same time.

He said this style of campaigning involved more spiritual activities such as joining voters for prayers and minus the fiery political speeches.

"During this holy month, it's best to keep to the by-election agenda and watch what one says, and not provoke vengeance, envy and suspicion," he told Bernama.

"This by-election is a test of the Muslims' maturity in politics. So don't taint the Ramadan month merely for the sake of each other's political interests," he advised.

The same opinion was echoed by Universiti Teknologi Mara Communication and Media Studies Faculty senior lecturer, Assoc Prof Dr Ismail Sualman who said the BN and PAS should not only give less political speeches but take a healthier approach, such as visiting voters at their homes to get to know them better.

"Respect the Ramadan month, especially since both candidates are Muslims. Refrain from the usual campaign which often touches on personal issues and exaggerated lies," he said.

Ismail called for the halt of social media campaigning through Facebook and Twitter which he said tended to be seditious and tarnished the image of the opponents.

International Islamic University of Malaysia law lecturer, Assoc Prof Dr Shamrahayu Abdul Aziz felt that this style of campaigning should be extended to all other elections as well.

She said such a wise approach should not be limited to the holy month as every campaign ought to be transparent in the delivery of promises to the people.

"Even though it's only a by-election campaign, it is not exempted from core values and decency in speech. It should portray something good and avoid negativity," she said.

The by-election is a straight fight between BN's Tengku Zaihan Che Ku Abd Rahman and PAS candidate Endot alias Azlan Yusof.

The seat fell vacant after assemblyman Dr A. Rahman Mokhtar of the BN died on June 26.

Polling is on July 24.

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