

PAS Campaign Is Politics Of Condemnation And Hatred
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KUALA BESUT, (Bernama) -- With five days to the Kuala Besut state seat by-election on Wednesday, PAS is increasingly veering from its strategy to campaign moderately and civilly in respecting the holy month of Ramadan.

The by-election will see a straight fight between a Barisan Nasional (BN) candidate, represented by UMNO, and a candidate from PAS, thus turning the contest into a fierce battle between two Malay parties.

PAS's Spiritual Leader, Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat who appeared at a ceramah in Kampung Beris Pak Abu Thursday night did not at all touch on the party's candidate or vision if it wins the seat.

On the other hand, the former Kelantan menteri Besar openly condemned UMNO and accused BN's main party of rejecting Islam.

"They (UMNO) said I did not build a mosque in the 23 years I was menteri besar. Yes, UMNO builds mosques but they don't pray," he said to chuckles and laughter from the audience, who obviously agreed with such a reckless, sweeping accusation.

Like previously, Nik Aziz also said that unlike PAS, UMNO only struggled for the Malays and was worldly, and not struggling to uphold Islam and in the interest of Muslims for their wellbeing in this world and the hereafter.

Clearly, what was uttered by the PAS leader was against civility of campaigning during the holy month, whereby Muslims should avoid extreme behaviour including defaming others, inciting hatred and attacking any quarters.

Several academicians had previously voiced that it was important for UMNO and PAS to practise 'Ramadan politics' to prove to the world that in the politicking fervour, Malaysia, as an Islamic nation, still respected Ramadan and capable of maintaining unity among its people.

Since the Kuala Besut by-election campaign began on July 12, it was observed that the issues raised by PAS mainly gravitated around prospering the people of Terengganu and winning the seat to make the position 16-16 in the state assembly.

In several ceramah, PAS orators were also reported to have made numerous allegations against the BN candidate, Tengku Zaihan Che Ku Abdul Rahman.

PAS central committee member, Dr Dzulkefli Ahmad at a news conference held at the party's by-election headquarters in Kampung Baharu on Wednesday, stated that the strategy was not to carry out any personal attacks against the opponent.

However, PAS would raise issues involving the professionalism of Tengku Zaihan as an ex-engineer of the district of Besut following the non-functioning of the Lowvler Dam in Pengkalan Nangka which failed resulting in dry padi fields.

Personal attacks on the opponent clearly show disrespect for the residents of Besut who, prior to this, demanded that the political parties' campaigning for the by-election be moderate to show respect for Ramadan.

This is different from the campaign of BN and Tengku Zaihan, who is comfortable meeting voters openly and using a personal-touch approach by breaking fast, performing Tarawih prayers followed by sitting to moreh with the local residents, instead of organising many ceramah with the presence of top leaders as baits to draw crowds.

PAS has been maintaining its approach of holding public ceramah with the party's leaders from all over the country addressing the crowd, after Tarawih prayers.

To influence voters, PAS' by-election director for the Kuala Besut seat, Datuk Husam Musa did a reverse psychology to make the PAS agenda of 16-16 a success by saying the party would not set up a new government in Terengganu even if it wins the seat.

Stating that the BN-led Terengganu government would instead be maintained, Husam was also reported to have said that it could use the seat as a counterweight with a constructive role to propose the management of the state to be orientated towards the betterment of the people of Terengganu.

Ironically, PAS which wanted to be seen as the champion of the people is not prepared to face UMNO itself.

Husam has challenged UMNO to a debate on issues related to the people of Terengganu by inviting Communication and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek, representing BN, to square off with Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) strategic director Rafizi Ramli, for the opposition pact,.

Thus, what is the strength of PAS to fight for the welfare of the people if it has to depend on PKR to speak on its behalf?

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