

**Despite fasting month, a roaring start for Kuala Besut by-election**  
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The fight for the Kuala Besut state seat in Terengganu is off to a roaring start as both candidates get down to work despite it being the fasting month.

Azlan Yusof had an early start in campaigning as the PAS candidate in the first by-election since the 13th General Elections, with help from his party colleagues and other Pakatan Rakyat (PR) members.

As soon as nomination was over yesterday, Che Long, as he is popularly known, performed his Friday prayers at the Kuala Besut mosque. Wasting no time at all, he was ferried up and down Kuala Besut to meet as many voters as possible before the big day on July 24.

Che Long wore sneakers instead of leather shoes as he moved around to meet the voters. The PAS candidate is well-known in Kuala Besut, having been born and bred here before setting up a business.

But a tough road awaits Che Long as he now has to convince the people of Kuala Besut that he would be able to solve their problems and cater to their needs as their assemblyman.

In the May 5 polls, PAS candidate Nafisah Ismail was beaten by the late Dr A. Rahman Mokhtar from BN with 2,434 votes.

With that in mind, Che Long continued his campaign yesterday evening, visiting west Kuala Besu and then the Ramadhan Bazaar in town where he met more voters.

After breaking fast, the businessman performed his terawih prayers and moved on from one ceramah to the other. Last night, Che Long attended three - at Pasti Pantai, Pusu Tinggi and Gong Penaga, even if it was just to introduce himself.

The ceramah only began after 10pm to allow the Muslims to perform their terawih prayers during fasting month. Ninety-eight per cent of the voters in Kuala Besut are Muslim.

PAS is relying heavily on ceramahs and going from door-to-door as its main way of reaching the public here as BN had an advantage in using mainstream media for their campaign.

Most people in Kuala Besut have limited access to online media, which could explain why voters in Kuala Besut continued to vote for BN.

Meanwhile, BN candidate Tengku Zaihan Che Ku Abdul Rahman was just as busy as Che Long. The party's machinery have brought him to Pulau Perhentian even before nomination day, along with the media, to meet with the constituents there.

There are 771 voters on this island and in GE13, only 28.2 per cent or 179 people voted for PAS. However, their dissatisfaction with the BN candidate might swing the votes over to PAS this time.

Thirty-seven year-old Tengku Zaihan is a former engineer with the Kuala Besut Drainage and Irrigation Department. "It is the second day of fasting and I have not broken my fast at

home yet," the father-of-four said, revealing that he has not had a moment's rest since being named candidate for the seat.

Tengku Zaihan was scheduled to meet and break fast in Kampung Nangka last night, which has always been a PAS fortress.

Elections during Ramadan is expected to prove to be a great challenge for the candidates and their machinery. Their movements will be limited in the day because of the hunger pangs.

To not fast, is out of the question. If they are caught eating, they lose credibility and – votes.

In addition, Umno has been preaching and acting in the name of Islam these days.

The best time to campaign during the fasting month would be during the Ramadan Bazaar in the evening, where candidates can break their fast and perform their prayers with the voters and attend ceramah later at night.

Maybe after this, the parties can organise an early morning sahur with the voters during the campaign period, said observers. - July 13, 2013.

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