

Perhentian voters lean towards BN, remembering late MP fondly
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By Mohd Farhan Darwis

Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh's popularity and the excellent track record of the late Kuala Besut state assemblyman Dr A. Rahman Mokhtar pose a great challenge for both Barisan Nasional (BN) and Pakatan Rakyat (PR) candidates in the Kuala Besut by-election.

At least in Pulau Perhentian, PAS candidate Azlan Jusoh and BN's Tengku Zaihan Che Ku Abd Rahman must convince the 733 voters they can match A. Rahman's dedication to them.

A village head from the island, Zainuddin Mohd, 44, said the late A. Rahman had always taken great care of the island residents' welfare "He would stay late into the night listening to our grouses. Once even up to 2am.

"Dr Rahman is the role model for both candidates. They must convince us they are as good as him," he told The Malaysian Insider when met at Pulau Perhentian.

Zainuddin, who has been a village chief for the past two years, said A. Rahman was a people's champion.

"He (A. Rahman) never observed any protocol. They must follow in his footsteps," said Zainuddin, who is also known fondly as "Abang Din".

Another figure that PAS and its machinery have to deal with is Idris Jusoh, given his position as the Besut MP, said Zainuddin.

Villager Dazrul Che Daud agreed with Zainuddin, who said that the villagers are very comfortable with the Second Education Minister who has developed the constituency.

"The majority of the people here are fond of Idris, he is good in carrying out his duties," Dazrul said.

The Election Commission (EC) has fixed July 24 as polling day for the state seat.

The island with a 2,163 population has 733 voters. There are 17,683 voters in Kuala Besut.

PAS supporters here however agree that it would be a difficult feat for the PR component party to win, but express confidence that the Islamist party will reduce BN's majority count.

"It is difficult to win..but I am confident that BN's majority will be small," party supporter Razak Ishak, 57, said.

The father-of-seven who works in the tourism industry admitted that Azlan, fondly known as Che Long, is not an outstanding figure among the locals who are more acquainted with Tengku Zaihan.

"However, it will also be difficult if there is no opposition, as the government won't do its work," he said when met while bringing his youngest child on an outing around the island.

Some of the issues raised by the villagers include the stalled building of a mosque which has

been put on hold for the last three years.

"The project commenced in February 2010 and is expected to finish this year. However it is yet to be completed," a local who wished to remain anonymous said. - July 14, 2013

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