

**BN To Field Clean Candidate In Permatang Pauh - Muhyiddin
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BUKIT MERTAJAM, April 12 (Bernama) -- Barisan Nasional (BN) will consider all factors especially a clean record and the acceptance of the local residents in determining the candidate for the Permatang Pauh parliamentary by-election, said Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

He said the UMNO division had unofficially submitted several names as candidates for the by-election and this would be decided by the party's top leadership soon.

"We consider all factors. What is important is the acceptance of the Permatang Pauh voters, (the candidate) must have a good track record, not involved in any scandals, highly qualified and close to the locals.

"Ideally, they should be locals with good track records," Muhyiddin who is also UMNO deputy president told a press conference after chairing a meeting with state UMNO and BN leaders in Bukit Mertajam, Sunday.

Also present was UMNO secretary-general Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Mansor.

The deputy prime minister said UMNO Permatang Pauh and the state UMNO had expressed their commitment to giving the full support to whoever chosen to be the candidate decided by the top leadership.

Muhyiddin, who has been appointed to be director of both the Permatang Pauh and Rompin by-elections, said he would be assisted by UMNO vice-presidents Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi in Permatang Pauh and by Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein in Rompin.

Another UMNO vice-president Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal was appointed coordinator of both by-elections, he said.

Muhyiddin who is BN deputy chairman said that although described as the underdog in Permatang Pauh, BN was committed to winning in the by-election to continue its efforts to help the people in the constituency as they had long been neglected.

"We will set up a strong strategy for the by-election. We know we are the underdog in the constituency which is said to be a PKR stronghold, but nevertheless nothing is impossible...the BN's hopes are to win," he said.

Muhyiddin said he had identified the local and national issues which arose and the BN machinery was ready to provide explanations.

"Those within BN, including the friends of BN, had given their support in organising the

operations in the by-election," he said.

The Permatang Pauh seat was declared vacant after its incumbent, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, was disqualified as a Member of Parliament since March 16 after the Pardons Board rejected a petition for a royal pardon sought by the opposition leader's family over his conviction for sodomising his former aide, Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan.

Anwar is currently serving a five-year jail sentence at the Sungai Buloh Prison.

The Election Commission has set April 25 for nomination day, early voting on May 3 and polling day on May 7.

In the 2013 general election, Anwar retained the Permatang Pauh seat after defeating BN candidate Dr Mazlan Ismail with a majority of 11,721 votes.

At the special meeting with leaders of UMNO divisions, BN component parties, branches as well as district balloting centre heads at Wisma Transformasi UMNO, Bukit Mertajam, Muhyiddin said Permatang Pauh by-election would be a big opportunity for BN to prove its steadfastness in looking after the welfare of the residents in the constituency.

"We have held meetings and serious discussions about what BN need to do to win the by-election and bring about a new meaning and even create history.

"There are some parties that consider UMNO and BN are the underdogs. This means we are faced with a very difficult and challenging situation. But nothing is impossible in politics, the battle must be fought till the end and be serious in our efforts," he said.

Muhyiddin said BN needed to work harder and move as a team to attain success in Permatang Pauh.

"...to get to the peak of a mountain means we have to work harder. This was seen in the last general election when we were able to reduce the vote margin. Almost 40 percent voted for the BN candidate," he said.

He reminded the party machinery to focus on the voters by providing information and clarification on issues.

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