

**Zahid Hopes for Political Maturity during By-Election Campaigns**  
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SUNGAI BESAR, June 5 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has expressed the hope that the parties contesting the two upcoming by-elections would maintain during the campaign period the political maturity exhibited today during the nominations.

The Deputy Prime Minister said the calm and harmonious atmosphere at the nominations for the Sungai Besar and Kuala Kangsar parliamentary by-elections set for June 18 reflected political maturity.

"The leaders of the three parties greeted one another cordially, discussed political matters and sat at the same table for meals and drinks. This atmosphere must be maintained during the campaign period.

"This will be respectful of the Ramadan fasting month (which begins tomorrow). Besides, if differences of opinion can be celebrated with character and admiration, then we can leave it to the people to choose who they regard as the best," he said.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also an UMNO vice-president, spoke to reporters after the nomination for the Sungai Besar parliamentary by-election which sees a three-cornered contest among Barisan Nasional, PAS and Parti Amanah Negara.

Budiman Mohd Zohdi of BN, Dr Abdul Rani Osman of PAS and Azhar Abdul Shukor of Amanah, representing Pakatan Harapan, are involved in the three-cornered contest in Sungai Besar.

The contest for the Kuala Kangsar parliamentary seat is four-cornered, involving Datin Mastura Mohd Yazid of BN, Dr Najihatussalehah Ahmad of PAS, Prof Dr Ahmad Termizi Ramli of Amanah and Independent candidate Izat Bukhary Ismail Bukhary.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also a BN vice-chairman, advised BN component parties to work together to ensure a big victory for their candidates in the two by-elections.

"I thank all the BN component parties such as MCA, MIC and Gerakan as well as the BN-friendly parties for their election machinery. We find that the component parties are in high spirits.

"We have to operate as one team to meet the people who will be the judge as to who will be

the new MPs," he said.

Ahmad Zahid said BN would adopt a moderate approach during the campaign period mindful of the Ramadan fasting month but would ensure that its message got across to the voters in the two constituencies.

Asked about the three-cornered contest in Sungai Besar, Ahmad Zahid said BN would focus on the well-being of the people and would not interfere in matters involving PAS and Pakatan Harapan.

"I hope the people will place their trust in the BN," he said.

Asked about the BN's chances in Sungai Besar, he said it was hoped that the over 40,000 voters in the constituency would elect Budiman as their MP as he was a local who was well-known and understood their issues and problems.

"I hope the voters will vote based on the excellent track record of BN elected representatives and not give in to their emotions," he said.

The by-elections are being held following the deaths of the incumbents, Tan Sri Noriah Kasnon of Sungai Besar, and Datuk Wan Mohammad Khair-il Anuar Wan Ahmad of Kuala Kangsar, in a helicopter crash in Sarawak on May 5.

Noriah garnered 18,695 votes in the 2013 general election and beat Mohamed Salleh M. Hussin of PAS by a majority of 399 votes.

Sungai Besar has 42,836 voters, 67.18 per cent of whom are Malays; 30.68 per cent, Chinese; 1.91 per cent, Indians and 0.23 per cent, other communities.

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