

Hisham dares Dr M to contest in Pekan
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He says Dr Mahathir's announced intention to contest against Najib Razak is a 'populist' move.

KUALA LIPIS: PPBM chairman Dr Mahathir Mohamad's announced intention to contest in the Pekan parliamentary constituency in the 14th general election (GE14) is just a populist statement.

Umno vice-president Hishammuddin Hussein said the statement was deliberately issued when the Umno divisional delegates' meetings were being actively held and was aimed at disturbing the party members' focus.

"I see it as a populist statement. I challenge him to contest in Pekan.

"If he dares to, I myself, Datuk Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and the whole Barisan Nasional's leadership will go down there to defend the prime minister's (Najib Razak) position as party president ... so go ahead, if you dare," he said.

He was speaking at a media conference to reporters after opening the Cameron Highlands Umno division delegates meeting at Sungai Koyan here today.

The media conference was also attended by Cameron Highlands Umno division chief and State Housing and Municipal Committee chairman Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail and state Umno Liaison Committee representative Shahiruddin Ab Moin.

Hishammuddin said this when asked to comment on the aspiration of the former prime minister to contest in Pekan against Najib if necessary and if no other candidate was considered qualified.

On PKR vice-president Rafizi Ramli's statement that the current support of Malay voters for Pakatan Harapan was found to be more than for BN with the advent of GE14, he said the issue raised was not a new thing.

"Rafizi always makes various statements. When his statement is answered, he will move the goal post.

“He deliberately raises issues to see our reactions.

“For me, the statement is only an assumption that is deliberately raised especially before the impending GE14,” he said

Touching on the wishes of the division’s Umno delegates who wanted a representative from the party to replace MIC to contest for BN in the upcoming GE14, Hishammuddin said the proposal would be taken to the top leadership level for scrutiny.

“We have to look for candidates who are acceptable to the people. What is important in the present situation is that members in this hall (where the conference was held) alone are not able to make our candidates win.

“Without the support of all, we will not be able to win in multiracial areas, but I assure them, whatever the decision of the leadership will be for the sake of the party,” he said.

Wan Rosdy, in his speech earlier, said 39 out of 40 branches in the division wanted an Umno candidate to contest in the Cameron Highlands parliamentary constituency.

Malay and Orang Asli voters represent 55% of the voters. BN’s candidate from MIC G Palanivel won in the last general election. BN won the Jelai state assembly seat but lost the Tanah Rata state seat.

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