

Early announcement of GE14 candidates to prevent sabotage - Ahmad Zahid

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CYBERJAYA, March 19 (Bernama) -- The move by Barisan Nasional (BN) to announce its candidates for the 14th General Election (GE14) is timely to avoid any element of sabotage to the party and the candidates selected, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also BN deputy chairman, said the 'out of the box' move taken by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak as BN chairman would give more time for the party leadership to carry out any 'appeasement' process on any leader not selected as a candidate.

"Thus it can avoid any element of sabotage that usually happens when influential people are not nominated, and influencing the party machinery from boycotting the election campaign being carried out currently," he said at a media conference after participating in a recording of the 'Orang Diparol' program at the Al-Hijrah Studio, here today.

At a media conference with Malaysian journalists in Sydney, Australia yesterday, Najib said the BN might announce the candidates for the GE14 much earlier compared to two or three days before the nominations for the GE practised all this while.

According to Ahmad Zahid, based on previous experience the practice of announcing the candidates one day before nomination day was seen to be no longer suitable for implementation in the GE14 or any other general election subsequently.

Meanwhile, he said the selection of candidates for GE14 was made after a dynamic and comprehensive study was made on the individuals nominated by party grassroots, divisions and the respective states.

He said the dynamic studies involved three important factors namely the aspect of public awareness on the existence of the candidates in any particular area, the level of acceptance by the constituents and the candidates' capability to win the election.

"The study was carried out dynamically, it means that it was not done at random.

If a particular State or Parliamentary Constituency has no candidate that is acceptable, we will make a second selection, he said, adding that the power to change the candidate was Najib's absolute right.

On the momentum of public support and acceptance for the BN, Ahmad Zahid said it was growing to be more positive and encouraging particularly in the areas categorised as 'black' and 'grey'.

He was also 'pleased' when the criticisms he made during his visits to the various areas were well received by the UMNO members and BN machinery generally.

Concerning his statement yesterday that he was prepared to retire from politics much earlier, Ahmad Zahid, who is also the Member of Parliament for Bagan Datuk, jokingly said that GE14 would be his last if he was no longer chosen by Najib after this.

"If I am still needed by the voters in Bagan Datuk, I will retire before the age of 93," he added.

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