

PPBM: We won't suffer same fate as S46 in Lipis

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PETALING JAYA: Pahang PPBM has dismissed predictions that it will suffer defeat in Lipis like fellow Umno splinter party Semangat 46 (S46) did in the eighth and ninth general elections.

Pahang PPBM leader Wan Mohd Shahrir Abdul Jalil told FMT that the pundits who made the predictions had failed to consider the different circumstances which led to the formation of the parties, and the difference in their struggles.

He said S46 emerged out of a power struggle in Umno whereas PPBM was formed by a group that had lost faith in Umno and Barisan Nasional's (BN) ability to administer the country.

He added that S46 wanted political power for its own sake, whereas PPBM's concern was the welfare of the people, especially their economic well-being.

He expressed confidence in voters' ability to see the difference, adding that PPBM would win in Lipis as the people were tired of suffering from the rising cost of living.

S46 was formed in 1988 by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and his followers after they failed to wrest control of Umno from a faction loyal to then-prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

In the previous year, Mahathir had narrowly survived Tengku Razaleigh's bid for the Umno presidency and removed the latter's supporters from his cabinet.

In GE8, S46 managed to garner more than 40% of the votes in Lipis in a straight fight with BN, but its share deteriorated to slightly above 31% in GE9.

S46 was dissolved in 1996 after becoming greatly reduced in size. Many of its prominent members rejoined Umno.

With the exception of GE8 and GE9, PAS has contested for Lipis in every election since the seat was created in the 1958 redistribution.

PAS, competed against BN forerunner, the Alliance Party, during the first few elections in the constituency and even a by-election in 1972 after its incumbent Abdul Razak Hussin resigned.

The seat, however, remained with the Alliance Party and then BN after it.

BN has won the seat uncontested twice. The first time was during its first election in 1974, and the second was during the 1997 by-election after its incumbent Abu Dahari Osman died.

Although BN has most often fielded Malay candidates for the seat, the coalition chose on two occasions to field candidates from MCA. In 1986, it fielded Wang Choon Wing while in 1990 it fielded Chan Kong Choy. Even then, neither PAS nor S46 came anywhere close to beating BN.

In GE13, PAS candidate Mohd Mahyuddin Ghazal came close to beating Umno's Abdul Rahman Mohamad, garnering nearly 43% of the votes.

In GE14, chances are good that PAS will again put up a candidate for the constituency. However, Wan Shahrir said PPBM was not worried about the prospect of a three-cornered fight.

He said PAS' grassroots members were unhappy about the party's perceived alliance with Umno.

"The PAS grassroots are confused over PAS' strategy," he said. "They can't understand why the party is being friendly with Umno, its traditional enemy."

According to the 2010 census, Malays make up 87% of the population in Lipis.

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