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## EC notified of Permatang Pauh vacancy

**PUTRAJAYA:** Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia has notified the Election Commission (EC) of the vacancy for the Permatang Pauh parliamentary seat.

EC secretary Datuk Kamaruzaman Mohd Noor said a letter to that effect was faxed to EC chairman Tan Sri Abdul Rashid Abdul Rahman at noon yesterday. The commission, he said, would hold a meeting on Wednesday to fix the dates for nomination and polling if there was a contest for the Permatang Pauh seat.

"The meeting will also determine the dates to issue the writ and notices to pave the way for the by-election, as well as to decide which electoral roll to use," he said yesterday.

Kamaruzaman said the by-election should be held within 60 days of a seat falling vacant, adding that there was no provision that disallows campaigning or elections from being held during the fasting month, which starts on Sept 1.

The Permatang Pauh seat fell vacant following the resignation of its MP Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who made way for her husband Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, the PKR adviser to contest for the seat.

## PM: Talks did not touch on forming govt

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**Official welcome:** Abdullah and his wife Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah welcoming Brunei Crown Prince Pengiran Muda Al-Muhtadee Billah Bolkia and his consort at the official welcoming ceremony at Dataran Putra in Putrajaya yesterday.

**PUTRAJAYA:** The talks between Umno and PAS top leaders did not touch on forming a coalition government, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

"Actually, in my meetings with party leaders, we never even raised this issue. Our talks only focused on religion and because over 90% of Muslims in the country are Malays, it touched on the Malays as well.

"It was in this context that we talked about lessening any dispute which may arise between Muslims. What form this took, whether *muza-karah* (dialogue) or *muqabalah* (discussion), does not matter.

"The talks were held with sincere intentions. We did not talk about other matters," he said.

He was commenting on PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang's statement that the party would not cooperate or form a coalition government with Umno and would remain loyal to Pakatan Rakyat.

Meanwhile, DAP national chairman Karpal Singh, in a statement, said Abdul Hadi's statement augured well for Pakatan's future.

He added that it would be in the interest of all member parties for PAS to speak only through Abdul Hadi on Pakatan-related issues. — Bernama