

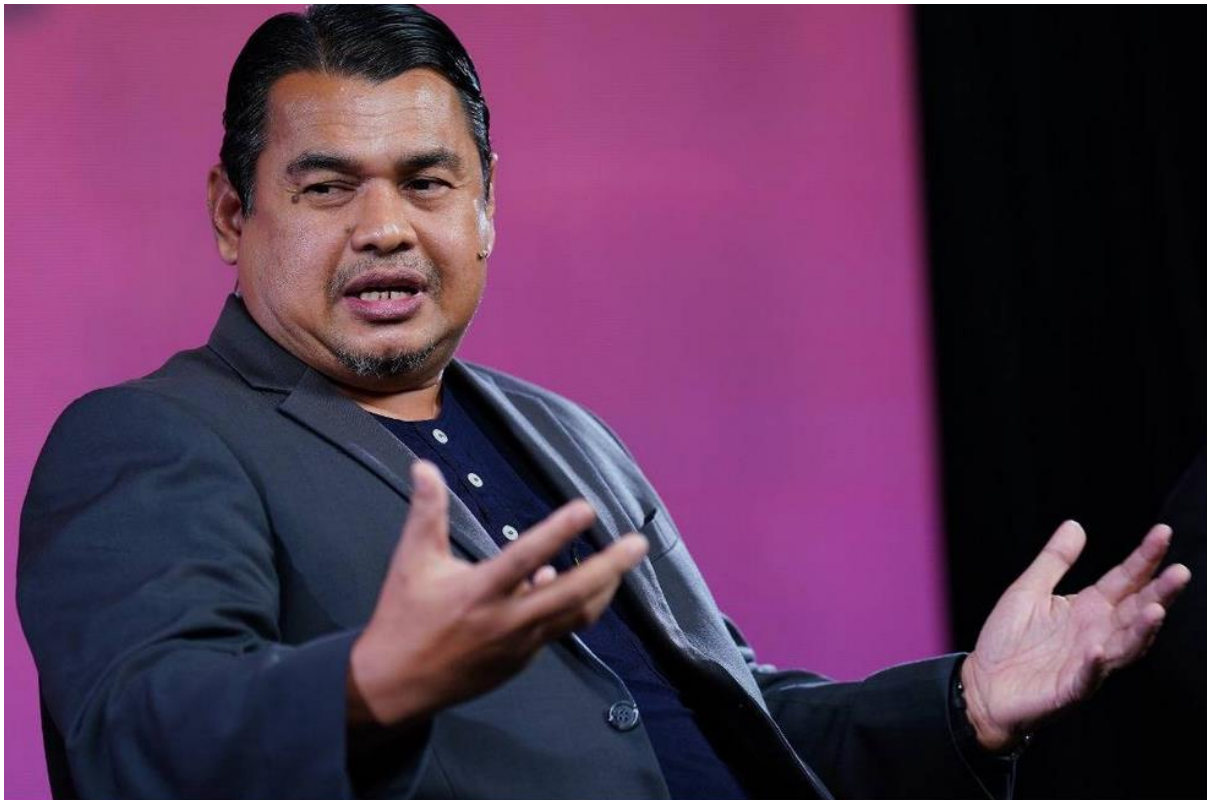
MCA, MIC's decision to sit out from KKB by-election seen as small 'bonus' for opponent



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22 Apr 2024 03:16pm



Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) Literacy and Political Advocacy Research Fellow Associate Professor Dr Mohd Yusri Ibrahim.

SHAH ALAM - The decision of MIC and MCA not to take part in the Kuala Kubu Baharu state by-election campaign if the seat is not contested by a candidate from the Barisan Nasional (BN) component party does not affect the unity government's preparations to maintain victory in the area.

Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) Literacy and Political Advocacy Research Fellow Associate Professor Dr Mohd Yusri Ibrahim said this was because grassroots support, especially from the Chinese and Indian ethnic groups, for the two parties were at a very low level.

"In the Peninsular context, the real cooperation in the unity government is between PH-Umno while the PH-BN cooperation is just a formality on paper.

"As long as PH-Umno cooperation is strong, the government will remain strong, MCA and MIC do not exert too much influence now either in the government or in BN itself. In Malaysian politics, MCA and MIC's rival is DAP.

"MCA and MIC lost the majority of Chinese and Indian support because they switched their support to DAP. Strategically, if both BN component parties support DAP, it means strengthening DAP's position, (so) it is not good for the long-term survival of MCA and MIC, " he told Sinar, yesterday.

Previously, MCA and MIC issued statements that the two BN coalition parties would not campaign in the Kuala Kubu Bharu state by-election if the government candidate was not from BN.

The MCA Political Development Committee said the matter was decided in its meeting on Saturday.

"After careful consideration, the unanimous decision of the committee is that if the proposed candidate is not a member of any BN component party, then MCA will not participate in any campaign efforts," said the MCA Political Development Committee was reported saying in a statement.

On March 22, BN chairman Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the coalition would not claim the Kuala Kubu Bharu seat and give way to the incumbent party in the unity government, DAP.

Earlier, MIC president Tan Sri SA Vigneswaran said the party would not campaign in the same by-election because it was not contested by a BN candidate.

When asked whether the boycott by MCA and MIC could give Perikatan Nasional (PN) an advantage, Yusri who was also a policy studies lecturer said this was seen as a "bonus" for the opponent.

"A small amount can be used as campaign capital by PN. However, in the context of voter support, it does not have much influence.

"This is because the core voters of MCA and MIC are very minimal. The tendency of non-Malay voters in general has been towards PH, only Malay voters will be up for grabs and bets in this Kuala Kubu Bharu state by-election," he said.