

22 JUN 1998

Candidate

BN PICKS ISMAIL KASSIM TO STAND IN ARAU

KANGAR, June 22 (Bernama) -- The Barisan Nasional (BN) has picked Arau divisional Umno Youth chief Ismail Kassim to stand on its ticket for next month's Arau parliamentary by-election, Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan announced today.

Ismail, 38, who is also Shahidan's youngest brother and a UPM graduate, tendered his resignation as a senior Bernas general manager upon being chosen to stand for the by-election.

Nomination has been fixed for Wednesday while July 4 has been set for polling if there is contest.

Shahidan, who made the announcement at the Residency Hall in Jalan Kolam here said Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has endorsed Ismail's candidacy.

Asked whether choosing his own brother to contest the seat would rekindle the controversial issue of nepotism, Shahidan said the matter did not arise at all.

Shahidan said he was not involved in naming Ismail as the BN candidate for the by-election.

"Don't link me with the selection," he said.

Meanwhile, hundreds of well-wishers and supporters, gathered at the hall in the compound of the Menteri Besar's official residence, burst into applause as Ismail was named as the BN candidate.

"I thank party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for choosing me," he said later.

Before joining Bernas, the government-owned rice trading company, Ismail was teaching for 10 years.

Ismail, who joined Umno 20 years ago, is also Perlis Umno Youth vice-chief.

The Arau seat fell vacant following the death of the Member of Parliament Kamarudin Ahmad last May 25 of a stroke.

-- BERNAMA

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