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Ignore ties with MB, says Arau candidate

KANGAR, Tues. - The Barisan Nasional candidate for the Arau parliamentary by-election today urged voters not to judge him as the younger brother of Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim.

Ismail Kassim said he'd rather they judge him on his own ability and willingness to carry out a job.

The 38-year-old former Bernas Holdings senior manager said his selection was the prerogative of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"It's coincidental that I'm Shahidan's sibling.

"The Menteri Besar had never promoted me or even encouraged me to enter politics in the first place," he added.

Ismail said he was well-versed with the conditions and cultural environment in rural Arau where he had spent his life, except for the four years as a Universiti Putra Malaysia undergraduate.

"I was born and bred in Tambun Tulang where my late father was a padi farmer," he said.

Popularly known as `Cu' among friends and local residents, Ismail said he was prepared for the responsibility shouldered by an elected representative.

He also said he was aware his candidacy may raise charges of nepotism and cronyism.

"And Guan Eng too?" was his immediate response in reference to the Kota Melaka MP who is the son of DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang.

The Arau seat fell vacant following the death of Kamaruddin Ahmad on May 25.

The former magistrate contested on a BN ticket in the 1995 general election and won by 6,929 votes.

The Election Commission has fixed tomorrow as Nomination day. In the event of a contest, polling will be held on July 4.

(END)