

Shahrir likely to make comeback

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PUTRAJAYA: One of Johor's most outspoken politicians, Datuk Shahrir Samad, is likely to make a comeback in the general election.

Shahrir is expected to be fielded in the Johor Baru parliamentary constituency, sources said yesterday. With this move, they said, the former minister was likely to back in action at federal level.

Shahrir is the present Johor Baru Umno division chief.

Talk of his return surfaced in the last few months and gained momentum when there was specu-



lation that his prodigy Datuk Khaled Nordin, the incumbent Johor Baru MP, would be contesting a state seat instead to pave the way for him to assume the Menteri Besar's post.

When contacted, Shahrir said he would let the Prime Minister decide on his candidacy.

Asked whether he was interested in contesting, Shahrir replied: "I have offered myself to the party to serve Johor Baru in a new capacity,

as an MP, so it is entirely up to the Prime Minister."

Shahrir, 55, was once seen as a rising star in Umno, serving as a Cabinet minister from 1983 under Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, and was one of the youngest to be appointed as minister. He was Johor Baru MP between 1978 and 1990.

However, his alliance with Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, who challenged Dr Mahathir for the Umno president's post in 1987, put his political career on hold.

He was one of the three ministers dropped in 1987 following the party elections. Shahrir was then Welfare

Minister.

He was suspended in 1995 after he was alleged to have acted against the party in the general election but was reinstated the following year.

In 2000, he stood for a supreme council post and was placed 14th among the 25 elected.