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Ibrahim Ali can't contest on Pas ticket

KUALA SEPETANG, Mon. - Former Pasir Mas Umno division chief Datuk Ibrahim Ali can join Pas but he will not be allowed to contest the election on its ticket this time around, said Pas spiritual leader Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat.

"Maybe he will become our candidate in future but not in the coming election," the Kelantan Menteri Besar said after attending a ceramah at Tien Tien Siong Tay temple here last night.

He was commenting on speculation that Pas was considering pulling its own candidate from the Pasir Mas constituency to allow Ibrahim to go head-to-head against the man who replaced him as the Umno division chief there, Datuk Abdul Rahim Abdul Rahman.

It was unclear whether Ibrahim was considering standing as an independent or with the blessing of the conservative Islamic party.

The 53-year-old was upset with the Umno leadership after being dropped from the list of party officer bearers in Pasir Mas. He was one of four long-serving politicians dropped as part of the regeneration process in Umno Kelantan.

Umno leaders felt that an infusion of new talent would help the ruling party regain Kelantan.

Nik Aziz said Pas and Keadilan in Kelantan would give priority to their loyal members to contest the election.

But he did not say whether his party would support Ibrahim if the latter contested as an independent.

He also defended the personal attacks against Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, arguing that such a tactic was acceptable as Abdullah was an Umno leader.

"It is our party principle. Both Abdullah and (Tun Dr) Mahathir Mohamad are (from) Umno," he said.