

**Mahfuz denies eyeing Kedah MB's post**  
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**S Pathmawathy**

Anticipating exciting times ahead in national politics, PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar has politely refused an offer to contest in a Kedah state constituency at the next general elections.

"Why do I need to eye the MB (menteri besar's post) when I can opt for PM (prime minister)? MB is ranked below PM," he jested when asked on the whether he is keen on a challenge at state level.

Talks of Menteri Besar Azizan Abdul Razak being replaced were rife last year when his performance was questioned over the failure to tackle major floods in Kedah in 2010.

Detractors are also purportedly capitalising on the 72-year-old's ill-health, saying the state's administration needs to be reinforced to match the inroads made by BN in its attempt to oust the PAS-led government in the impending general election.

Mahfuz, 55, doused months of speculation that he has been eyeing the state's top post and was plotting to unseat Azizan, saying that he has waded into a bigger political arena.

He revealed that Pakatan Rakyat has already wrapped up seat allocations in Kedah, and that he intends to contest only in one constituency.

"I want to contest for a parliamentary seat, so how do I contest at state level too?" he told Malaysiakini in an interview.

"I was asked to contest in a state seat in Pokok Sena but I rejected the offer," he said, adding he would prefer to contest again in the same constituency, provided the party gives him the blessing.

Congenial ties with menteri besar

Despite rumours of a rocky relationship, Mahfuz said his bond with Azizan had always been congenial.

The Kedah-born MP rose to fame during the reformasi era when he led PAS Youth in the bid to free Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim, who was then sacked as deputy premier and later jailed for sodomy and corruption.

Asked whether the state should be helmed by a younger menteri besar, Mahfuz replied: "This issue is for the PAS leadership to decide... the question of whether one is young or old does not arise.

"(PAS spiritual leader) Nik (Abdul) Aziz Nik Mat is also old and even some menteri besar in leadership of some other states are old."

Most importantly, there has never been consideration on age eligibility, he said, adding: "It is capacity and the capability of the leader that matters.

"What if one is young and the person still fails... and lacking in talent and capability in managing the state's affairs?"

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