

'50-50 chance' seen for Mukhriz in Ayer Hitam

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By Abdul Rahim Sabri

KEDAH Even as Kedah Umno deputy liaison chief Mukhriz Mahathir's maiden campaign to wrest the Ayer Hitam state seat intensifies, some voters are of the opinion that he faces an uphill task.

The fact that he is the son of former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, as well as the incumbent Jerlun MP, may carry little weight, they told Malaysiakini.

Locals classified Mukhriz's chances as 50-50 against incumbent PAS candidate Abdul Ghani Ahmad, who had won in 2008 by a slim majority of 506 votes.

It is common knowledge that there was a split in the Jerlun Umno division between several senior leaders over the few seats available for contest, and this may play into PAS' hands.

Abdul Ghani said he may benefit from protest votes by supporters of those not selected by Umno.

A PAS party worker, who declined to be named, noted that Abdul Ghani is a local and that he accepted by the Chinese community.

This is because he has participated in or organised many activities, leading to several members of the Chinese community also campaigning for PAS, said the worker.

Although the campaign has into its fifth day, PAS has been slow in putting up posters and distributing materials.

Checks show that Mukhriz's team is off the mark, with posters having been put up at all roads leading to Ayer Hitam.

However, PAS supporters are not deterred by Umno's aggressive campaign, with party workers saying they "have been taught and trained to be patient".

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