

Jerai Umno chief now plays role of pacifier

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KEDAH Jerai Umno division chief Mohd Suhaimi Abdullah (above) now finds himself playing the role of pacifier, hoping to abate the anger of supporters over his non-candidacy for the Jerai parliamentary seat, and to get them to campaign for the man picked for the job instead.

He last night appealed for his supporters to abandon any thought of "sabotage", saying that while he understands their feelings, they must put the party first and not to focus on the choice of candidate, in this case caretaker Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Jamil Khir Baharom.

Describing his situation as similar to that of a "kuih benggang", which requires heat at the top and bottom to make, Mohd Suhaimi said he is sandwiched between his supporters' wrath and the wishes of Umno's top leadership.

"I ask (my machinery) that there be no elements (of sabotage), as we want to champion the party, not the candidate.

To overcome this and to placate his supporters, he said that he has explained the reason behind his non-selection to 53 directors and officers at the district polling centre.

He was referring to the possible "revenge" by the closure of several service centres in the constituency.

"The element of sabotage is there. It cannot be denied. Maybe (it is present) in the village where I cannot go and meet them (to explain the true situation)," he said when met by Malaysiakini last night.

"I said we must continue the struggle, (that) I am not hurt or despondent (over the party's choice of fielding Jamil Khir instead of him)."

Jamil Khir, who is also Kedah BN publicity and information bureau chief, is largely touted to be a Najib man.

However, Mohd Suhaimi suggested that the party leadership decided on Jamil Khir as they perhaps felt the latter had performed better or wanted to retain the current cabinet line-up as much as possible

“If he wins, he will remain a minister and I will be happy, a minister is coming to represent Jerai in parliament,” he said, adding that Jamil Khir is also a local with many friends in the PAS-held constituency.

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