

'I'M NOT DR M'S PUPPET'

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Candidate who represents ex-PM's Pejuang party says nobody told him to contest seat

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THE independent candidate for the Slim by-election, representing the yet to be registered Parti Pejuang Tanah Air (Pejuang), yesterday reassured voters that he was not former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's puppet.

Amir Khusyairi Mohamad Tanusi, 38, said the day he submitted his nomination form, he told himself that this was his struggle and it remained his priority.

"There was a report that said Selangor Menteri Besar (Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari) endorsed me, Mat Sabu (Amanah president, Mohamad Sabu) and other party leaders endorsed me — that is my rezeki.

"Questions like am I being used or will become Tun M's puppet... that never happens. To me, the



Amir Khusyairi Mohamad Tanusi speaking during an interview in Slim River yesterday. PIC BY: HAZREEN MOHAMAD



aspiration and struggle highlighted by Tun... I am trying my level best (to carry it out) and that is called trust (*amanah*).

"I have been following Tun since he was sacked (by Bersatu) and the trust given is not for me but for the people.

"No one told me to contest this seat. As usual, there must be a list

of candidates but when I was chosen, I took up the challenge even though I am not from here," he told the *New Straits Times* yesterday.

Asked whether Dr Mahathir had offered him any position in Pejuang, Amir Khusyairi said the matter had not been discussed.

"I do not see the point of having a position (in Pejuang), not yet.

To me, what is more important is to have an impact on the struggle (that I will carry) and on the position. I leave it to Allah," he said.

Asked on his strength compared with the other two candidates, Amir Khusyairi said that he would use his 13 years' experience as a lawyer and apply it in the context of a state assemblyman.

"I have been a lawyer for 13 years and always listen to my clients' grouses, (which is) the same concept as being an assemblyman. I need to listen to every problem and I need to find a solution. (Then) I need to act and channel the information."

On his campaign rounds, Amir Khusyairi said he had covered between 90 and 95 per cent of the constituents and his targeted voters were youth and senior citizens.

"Firstly, my targeted area is youth and secondly the senior citizens because without them we can't move forward," he said, adding that he hoped the people in Slim would vote for him on Saturday.

The Slim state by-election witnesses a three-cornered fight between a Barisan Nasional candidate and two independent candidates. They are Tanjung Malim Umno deputy chief Mohd Zaidi Aziz, 43, for BN, while the independent candidates are S. Santharasekaran, 44, and Amir Khusyairi.