

**Kedah PAS mulls Mat Sabu candidacy to keep state
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 6 — PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu could return to stand in Kedah as part of the state chapter's plans to keep the country's rice bowl state from Barisan Nasional (BN).

Kedah PAS deputy commissioner Datuk Phahrolrazi Zawawi said it was likely that the popular Mohamad (picture) would return to the state in the next general election as he had won there in the 1999 general election.

"There is a large probability that he will contest in Kedah, but this is up to the central committee to decide.

"If he is truly interested to be a candidate in Kedah, we have no objections," he was quoted as saying by the Malay daily Sinar Harian.

However, Phahrolrazi said the proposal had first to be discussed in the state PAS meeting before a decision is made.

PAS won the state in Election 2008 but BN has been hard at work to regain the state, with Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir touted as a possible menteri besar if it wins.

"If Mat Sabu contests in Kedah, I am convinced he can win because his influence is still strong here, especially Kuala Kedah," Phahrolrazi said, referring to the PAS No. 2 by his moniker.

"Kedah PAS is prepared to consider the proposal, but it requires agreement from all parties," he added.

The Kuala Kedah PAS chief said Mohamad has contested in four states including Kedah, Penang, Kelantan and Terengganu.

"We have already discussed candidates who can contest in the 13th general election, including imported candidates, but this has not been finalised. The official decision will only be announced before the election date," he said.

Last February, an internal crisis in Kedah PAS involving two members of the executive council, deputy commissioner Dr Ismail Salleh and Phahrolrazi, was linked to the issue of placing Mohamad in Kedah for the upcoming general election, which did not coincide with Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azizan Abdul Razak's plans.

However, Azizan as PAS state commissioner said he was ready to accept Mohamad contesting in any seat in the state if Mohamad received the "blessings" of the local PAS branches or was asked to be a candidate.

Earlier, The Malaysian Insider had reported that Mohamad was due to contest the Pendang parliamentary seat, which was the seat of former PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor.

The incumbent, Dr Mohd Hayati Othman, has said that he would contest a state seat to help the PAS state government if it meant keeping the state in the Islamist party's hands.

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