

Mukhriz faces tough fight despite family name
Malaysian Insider
April 30, 2013

ALOR STAR, April 30 — Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir faces a tough challenge in this general election, telling villagers here, half in jest, that “it could be the end of my political career”.

Mukhriz, 48, the incumbent MP for Jerlun, a constituency just outside of Alor Star, is now contesting the Ayer Hitam state seat, one of two state constituencies under Jerlun.

The switch suggests that should Barisan Nasional (BN) win, Mukhriz (picture) may be made menteri besar, The Straits Times reported today.

His challenge is trying to win over the 29,631 voters of Ayer Hitam. In the previous general election, PAS leader Abdul Ghani Ahmad won the seat by a mere 506 votes.

The PAS cleric is no pushover, being the Kedah executive councillor in charge of information and entrepreneur development.

Among older folk here he is simply “anak Mahathir” or Mahathir’s son. The mild-mannered Mukhriz is the political heir to the Mahathir name. His famous father, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, was prime minister for 22 years.

According to The Straits Times report, Mukhriz also faces another battle — working together with rivals from his own party in Kedah.

The state has 15 Umno divisions, with its chiefs often referred to as “warlords”. Mukhriz himself is not even a division chief.

The Mahathir name, even in Kedah, can only go so far, two senior members of Kedah Umno told The Straits Times.

It reported that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak wants Mukhriz to become the next Kedah menteri besar if BN wrests back the state from Pakatan Rakyat (PR). Not everyone agrees with this, but for now the warlords are keeping their peace.

Luckily for Mukhriz, PAS is also riven by infighting, the newspaper said.

PAS Menteri Besar Datuk Azizan Razak, 68, is sickly after suffering a heart attack two years ago and his rivals are jostling to push him out.

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