

Shahrir To Consider PM's Request To Continue Leading JB UMNO

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JOHOR BAHRU, Aug 25 (Bernama) -- Tan Sri Shahrir Abdul Samad will consider the prime minister's request for him not to withdraw from politics but to continue heading Johor Bahru UMNO, especially with the 14th general election approaching.

Shahrir, who is Johor Bahru UMNO division chief, told reporters after the opening of the division's delegates conference here today that he would discuss the matter with the division and branch leaders and members before making a decision.

When opening the conference, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had openly expressed hope that the Johor Bahru Member of Parliament would not step down, saying that Shahrir was still needed to lead the division.

"Why Johor Bahru is still held by UMNO and Barisan Nasional (BN) all this while Shahrir may agree or not, but the 'Shahrir factor' has resulted in Johor Bahru remaining in UMNO and BN's hands," the party president had said.

Najib said he saw Shahrir as being very committed to his tasks and had carried out various programmes including making the Battery Factory in Tampoi as a place for young people to do business and which had become a draw in this southern city.

Also supporting the call for Shahrir to continue helming Johor Bahru UMNO was Menteri Besar and state UMNO liaison chief Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, who in his speech at the same event, described Shahrir as a political icon, and a credible and respected figure.

Shahrir, who is also Felda chairman, had previously stated a number of times his intention to not contest in the coming GE14 as he felt the time had come for him to make way for a back-up leader in the party.

The 67-year-old Shahrir has over 40 years of experience in politics and has been the Johor Bahru MP for six terms since 1978.

Earlier, in his speech, he said UMNO's dominance in the Johor Bahru parliamentary constituency was not due to the 'Shahrir factor' but due to the UMNO division moving in one voice, besides the strong support of the grassroots.

He said to regard the achievements as the result of one person's job was inaccurate as it was the efforts of a united group, just like the various associations and organisations.

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