

FORMER PERLIS MUFTI BRACES FOR BIG CHALLENGES IN JEMORENG

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Datuk Dr Juanda Jaya

KUCHING: Former Perlis Mufti Datuk Dr Juanda Jaya—the BN candidate for Jemoreng—knows it will be a big challenge to serve a rural constituency if he won in the coming state election.

This 44-year-old Islamic scholar knows what he had to grapple with as he grew up in Kampung Igan, a rural village in Jemoreng constituency.

Juanda replaces Abu Seman Jahwie, who decided not to seek re-election due to health reasons.

Speaking to reporters after Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Adenan Satem revealed his candidacy on Tuesday, Juanda noted there were many challenges facing Jemoreng folk, but he would work closely with Adenan to sort things out.

“I accept my candidacy with great honour. I will work hard to bring to fruition Adenan’s aspirations. As a new face in politics, I will have to work extra hard for the benefit of the people.”

Sibu-born Juanda was appointed Perlis Mufti from 2009 to 2014 on a loan basis from the state government. Before his appointment, he had served as Sarawak deputy Mufti and as the state Islamic Religious Department principal assistant director.

He is now Sarawak Islamic Council's deputy president.

Meanwhile, rumours had it that if Juanda won, he would be appointed an assistant minister in the Chief Minister's Department (Islamic affairs). The speculation gain traction when Datuk Daud Abdul Rahman, the previous minister-in-charge of Islamic affairs, did not seek re-election in Tupong.

Fazzruddin Abdul Rahman, a political secretary to Works Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, is the BN candidate for Tupong.

"I have no idea about the speculations that I will be appointed an minister-in-charge of Islamic Affairs (to replace Daud)," replied Juanda when reporters posed the question.

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) Associate Prof Dr Jeniri Amir, meanwhile, was reported as saying it was appropriate to pick Juanda for Jemoreng.

Jeniri described Juanda as very knowledgeable and possesses vast experience in Islamic matters. Further, his moderate views had also made him well-liked by Muslims and non-Muslims.

"I am not surprised if he is appointed an assistant minister in charge of Islamic affairs after the election, provided he wins," said Jeniri, adding he had every confidence the Islamic scholar would win because of his track record.