

Kubang Pasu division to stay neutral

By Paul Gabriel

ALOR STAR, Mon. — The Kubang Pasu Umno division did not nominate anyone to contest in the coming party elections following a request by Prime Minister and party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

Opening the division's delegates' conference here, Dr Mahathir said he did not want any nomination from the division to be misconstrued as "reflecting the wishes of the Prime Minister."

He said he did not wish to take sides in the contest for posts in the party elections on Nov 30.

"There are people who interpret what Kubang Pasu Umno does as reflective of my stand. I therefore appeal to Kubang Pasu Umno division not to draw the nomination list for president, deputy president, vice-presidents and supreme council members," he said.

He said he feared candidates nominated by the division, which he heads, might use this to their advantage by claiming to be the "president's men."

"Everyone should contest on a fair and equal basis. I will not take sides but will only champion the cause and interest of the party," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said he did not want the Umno supreme council to be made up of "yes-men."

He said he preferred members with "differing views and opinions," adding that all views could be accommodated this way.

"If everyone agrees every time, we will not know if we have erred," he said.

Speaking to reporters later, the Barisan Nasional chairman said he felt that heads of other Barisan component parties should not "shove off" those who disagreed with them.

Asked whether other party presidents should emulate his neutral stance in Umno, he said: "It is left to them. But we should bear in mind that our parties were formed not for us to become presidents, but to contest and win in elections."

Dr Mahathir said Mentris Besar who lost out in the race for Umno supreme council seats would likely be appointed members to the council.