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Ghafar: I am not seeking re-election

MALACCA, Sat. - Former Deputy Prime Minister Tun Ghafar Baba will not seek re-election for the Jasin parliamentary seat in the next general election.

Ghafar said last night he had submitted a letter to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad informing him of this.

"However, I leave it to Dr Mahathir to accept my decision. If Dr Mahathir wants me to run one more time, I would do so, as I am always supportive of him and Umno.

"I have also relayed my intentions back in 1995 not to seek nomination. However, Dr Mahathir asked me to stay on and, reluctantly, I accepted," he said, joking that if he was nominated again, it was not his fault but Dr Mahathir's.

Ghafar said this in his speech before Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin launched the Ayer Panas BN election machinery last night.

Last night's meeting was the first between Abu Zahar and Ghafar after the latter lost in the Jasin Umno election in 1995.

Abu Zahar, who was the incumbent then, was challenged by Ghafar who lost by six votes.

Ghafar also said he did not harbour any ill-feelings about losing to Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in the 1993 party elections.

Earlier, Abu Zahar criticised groups within Umno which tried to create a rift between him and Ghafar.

"Yes, Ghafar lost to me in 1996. However, I still regard him as my father and I still hold the highest respect for him. For this reason, I stuck my neck out in having the Jasin division support Ghafar in 1993 when he was challenged by Anwar," he said.

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