

Kubang Pasu selections were delegates' choice, says Dr M

NST 2.4.2000

By Patvinder Singh

PETALING JAYA, Sat. -- Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said the Kubang Pasu division's nominations for the three party vice-presidencies was not an indication that they should be voted in at the May party elections.

Dr Mahathir said he did not give any directive on the nominations and that they were choices made by delegates to the division's delegates meeting on March 30.

He was commenting on assumptions being made by some quarters that the three vice-presidential nominations by the Kubang Pasu Umno division which he heads were done with his consent.

The Prime Minister told reporters this after greeting his wife, Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport upon her return from a trip to Iraq.

At the division meeting, incumbents Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib together with Pagoh chief Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin were nominated for the vice-presidential contest.

Asked if it meant that delegates to the Umno general assembly should vote for the three nominated candidates, he said: "No, it need not be an indication as to what I like or dislike. It is an indication of the views of the (divisional) delegates.

"They make a choice without asking me or seeking my advice. Even if they ask advice I won't give it."

Dr Mahathir also commented on a March 25 article in Singapore's *The Straits Times* in which columnist Chua Lee Hoong criticised Malaysia as the only democratic Government left in Asia that did not have a change in leadership in the

last decade or in Malaysia's economic policies during the recent Asian crisis, especially in selective capital controls.

"As there is Press freedom in Singapore, they are free to comment on other countries," Dr Mahathir said.

On what action the Government would take, Dr Mahathir said: "We don't take any notice of such things."

In Kangar, Muhyiddin said he would not exploit the nomination for the vice-presidency given to him by the Kubang Pasu division.

"I don't want people to accuse me of trying to make a big issue (out of the nomination). Let us leave it at that," he said.

Muhyiddin, who is also the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister had earlier launched a seminar on consumer protection law organised by his ministry's enforcement division here.