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Mukhriz fails to secure Kubang Pasu

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - It was day of mixed fortunes for Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir.

He lost the contest for the Kubang Pasu Umno Youth divisional chief's post by nine votes to challenger Zulkili @ Md Ros.

Mukhriz, 40, the third son of former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, garnered 132 votes to Zulkilfi's 141 votes.

The businessman, who had earlier been nominated by the division for the post of Umno Youth vice-chief, had been the frontrunner for the divisional chief's post with 42 nominations to Zulkifli's 34.

A third contender Suhaimi Abu received only nine nominations.

Division youth permanent chairman Rosli Omar announced the decision to a large gathering of delegates at the Lye Huat hall in Changlun at 12.45am.

Zulkifli told reporters that he wanted members to close ranks and mend rifts created by the contest.

He said he would support Mukhriz in the latter's bid for a seat on the Umno Youth Executive Committee.

Mukhriz, who accepted defeat, said he would continue serving the division in recognition of the three decades that members had served Dr Mahathir in his capacity as divisional leader.

Meanwhile, the Gua Musang Youth division, nominated Umno supreme council member Datuk Azimi Daim for the movement's vice-chief's post.

Mukhriz and Azimi are the exceptions to the nomination of Youth exco member Khairy Jamaluddin for the No 2 post in the movement by 20 divisions after youth meetings began yesterday.

All 22 divisions nominated Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein for the Youth chief's post. Azimi's nomination came barely hours after Gua Musang Umno divisional chairman Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah announced his intention to challenge Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for the party presidency.

Azimi was nominated despite changing his mind over an earlier decision to vie for the post while Mukhriz had never indicated an intention to contest the post.

Mukhriz received the majority of votes over Khairy and Azimi when Kubang Pasu Umno Youth permanent chairman Rosli Omar called for a show of hands from the 280 delegates after the three names were proposed.

Mukhriz later told reporters he was surprised by the nomination as he was only contesting the divisional Youth chief and divisional executive council member posts.

"I was surprised because I did not expect this. I am grateful for the show of support but I personally feel the position should go to those who had offered themselves for the post," he said without naming them.

On what he would do if he managed to garner enough nominations for the number two post, he said: "I do not want to say I will decline, but I feel the post should go to those who had offered themselves because they are more experienced and have proven themselves in the movement."

He also said it was not "a good sign for me to decline and I would rather not get enough nominations".

Mukhriz hoped that other divisions would nominate him to the Youth executive council.

"I would think he (Hishammuddin) wants his successor to serve the movement for more than just one term. As such, I think the No 2 post should go to a younger person," he said.

Other youth divisions in Kedah which met today - Merbok, Baling, Padang Terap, Pendang, Langkawi and Pokok Sena - nominated Hishammuddin and Khairy for the movement's No 1 and No 2 posts respectively.

In Kelantan, nominations for the duo came from Jeli, Ketereh and Pengkalan Chepa Youth while in Negri Sembilan, it came from Rembau where Khairy won as Youth chief uncontested.

Khairy replaced Ghani Hasan, the younger brother of Datuk Mohamad Hasan, the Menteri Besar.

For the Puteri Umno wing, vice-chief Noraini Ahmad and Kedah Puteri chief Suraya Yaacob were neck-and-neck in terms of nominations for the movement's top post.

Suraya, who yesterday had only two nominations to Noraini's five, closed the gap today with four nominations from her home State of Kedah.

Four of the five Puteri Umno divisions in the State, which met today, nominated Suraya Yaacob while one division - Kubang Pasu - gave its nomination to Noraini.

Suraya's nominations came from Pokok Sena, Jerlun, Kuala Kedah and Padang Terap. These divisions also nominated Negri Sembilan Puteri chief Bibi Sharliza Mohd Khalid for the No 2 post.

Three Puteri divisions in Sabah - Pensiangan, Putatan and Sepanggar - nominated Noraini for the movement's No 1 post and State Puteri chief Rosnah Abdul Rashid Shirleen as the vice-chief.

In Kelantan, the Gua Musang division nominated Suraya as Puteri chief and Rosnah as her deputy, while Jeli nominated Suraya Yaacob as chief and Federal Territory Puteri chief Azlinda Mohd Rashad as vice-chief.

Meanwhile, incumbents Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and vice chief Datuk Seri Shahrizat Jalil were nominated to retain their posts.

The divisions are Langkawi, Baling, Kubang Pasu, Alor Star, Pokok Sena and Merbok (Kedah) and Tuaran in Sabah, Tumpat, Ketereh and Jeli (Kelantan).

The Gua Musang Wanita and Pengkalan Chepa division meetings have been postponed.

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