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Mukhriz gets Dr M's blessing

By Chow Kum Hor

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir's decision to go into active politics has received the blessings of his father and former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"My father gave me the greenlight when I spoke to him about the matter about a month ago," he said, explaining his decision to contest the post of Kubang Pasu division Youth chief and a seat in the Umno Youth executive council.

He said it was public knowledge that when Dr Mahathir was in power, he discouraged his children from entering politics as he was concerned that it would create the impression that he was starting a dynasty.

He said Dr Mahathir did not offer him any advice after hearing about his plans to become more active in Umno politics.

"It was his typical, non-emotional reply. He said it was okay and I knew I would go into this on my own," Mukhriz said.

The reaction from his mother, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, was no different.

It is learnt that Kedah Umno Youth will pass a resolution soon to endorse him for the Youth executive council post.

Asked why he decided to contest the Youth chief post in Kubang Pasu, a division his father used to lead, Mukhriz said he had been an ordinary member of the Jitra branch since 2000. The branch comes under the Kubang Pasu division.

"When I was toying with the idea of being a more active member in Umno, I had the option of either staying in Kuala Lumpur or serving at the state level.

"Considering that Umno is a grassroots party, I felt I should go back to Kedah. Vying for a post in the division is a natural choice since Jitra falls under Kubang Pasu," he said.

Although a Kuala Lumpur-based businessman, he said he went back to Kedah quite often as his father had a house there.

On whether the two posts were stepping-stones for him to go for higher party or government positions, he said he was not thinking too far ahead.

"I take things one step at a time. My focus now is on the two posts."

He said he hoped to win the posts, but did not want to take things for granted now.

Mukhriz said as chairman of association of former Maktab Rendah Sains Mara students (Ansara), he had organised many educational, economic and entrepreneurship programmes. He added that he would continue to focus on these areas if he were to win the posts in Kubang Pasu and Umno Youth.

Mukhriz, the fifth of Dr Mahathir's and Dr Siti Hasmah's seven children, has never held any party posts.

He has also kept a much lower profile than his siblings.

Elder brother Mokhzani is the Kedah Umno treasurer and former Umno Youth treasurer. Mirzan is president of Konsortium Logistik Bhd while sister Marina is the Malaysian AIDS Council president.

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