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Dr Mahathir: I will support candidate chosen by Abdullah for Kubang Pasu

JITRA, Fri. - Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he would support the candidate chosen by the party to contest the Kubang Pasu parliamentary seat in the next general election.

He also reiterated his promise not to interfere in the selection process.

Dr Mahathir, who is Kubang Pasu MP, said: "The candidate will be determined by Umno acting president and Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, and I will not interfere.

"I only give my assurance that I will support whoever is picked," he said after a meeting with the division's protem committee.

Asked about the political situation in the constituency since his retirement, Dr Mahathir described it as healthy. "I think we will win here."

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, was in Kedah to attend the declaration of the new Sultanah of Kedah at Istana Anak Bukit.

When approached by reporters after the Umno meeting which was held later in the afternoon, Dr Mahathir expressed his surprise and quipped: "Why are you here, I am no longer the Prime Minister!"

On the meeting, he said it was to enable him to express his gratitude to all his supporters in the division.

"I have been the Kubang Pasu MP for 29 years and all the committee members supported me. So I am here to thank them and others who have supported me."

Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah also visited the Kubang Pasu parliamentary constituency's community service centre, situated next door to the Umno division office, before departing for Kuala Lumpur.

Among those present during the visit was Universiti Utara Malaysia vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Ahmad Fawzi Basri, who said he took the opportunity to discuss with Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah the university's decision to award them with doctorates.

He said the former Prime Minister and First Lady initially declined the offer and it took some persuasion before they changed their stand.

"I managed to speak to Dr Mahathir just now, and following an appeal, he has agreed," he said.

Ahmad Fawzi said Dr Mahathir would receive an honorary doctorate in development management to recognise his contributions to the country and UUM, which is his brainchild. Dr Siti Hasmah will receive an honorary doctorate in social work management for her involvement in the field.