

# Umno general assembly chooses Mahathir and Ghafar

# A vote for continuity

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. —** Umno voted for continuity today by rejecting a major challenge to party leader **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad**. They returned him for his third term as Umno president, and elected **Encik Abdul Ghafar Baba** as his deputy.

In the most closely contested party elections in Umno's history, Dr Mahathir defeated challenger **Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah** by 43 votes while Encik Ghafar defeated incumbent **Datuk Musa Hitam** by

40 votes.

There were no spoilt votes in the contest for presidency, but 41 spoilt votes were reported in the contest for deputy president. Election committee deputy chairman **Tan Sri Abdul Kadir Yusof** said they were deposited unmarked.

The support for Dr Mahathir was clearly shown when Umno members voted in Encik Anwar Ibrahim as one of the three vice-presidents. Encik Anwar resigned as Umno Youth leader yesterday to "go for broke".

In the process, Umno history was created when two leaders from the same State — Penang — became vice-presidents. The other was **Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi**, who joined **Datuk Seri Haji Wan Mokhtar Ahmad** in retaining his post.

**Datuk Seri Wan Mokhtar** polled 935 votes, **Datuk Abdullah** 879, and **Encik Anwar** 850.

The results of the election were celebrated with flares and a cake at the Prime Minister's official residence, **Sri Perdana**, at about 10.50 pm. With him were Encik Ghafar, Encik Anwar, Finance Minister **Daim Zainuddin**, Umno secretary-general **Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid**, Wanita Umno leader **Datin Paduka Rafidah Aziz**, and other supporters.

Dr Mahathir expressed satisfaction with the Umno elections and the responsibility and maturity the delegates had shown.

**Tengku Razaleigh** said he was disappointed to have lost, but the results showed "we still represent about 50 per cent of Umno. Therefore, we are still a force to be reckoned with."

He called on all his supporters to give their full support to Dr Mahathir, and said they would work with the victors to consolidate party unity.

**Datuk Musa** also called for

party unity, renewing the plea he made in his address to the Umno Youth-Wanita Umno general assemblies yesterday.

He urged all party members to remain calm and to accept the results. He said the elections had been carried out in Umno's best democratic traditions.

The results were announced by Umno permanent chairman Tan Sri Sulaiman Ninam Shah about 10.42pm, six hours after polling ended. Tan Sri Sulaiman and his deputy, Datuk Shuib Haji Ahmad, were comfortably re-elected.

Only the results of the contests for party president, deputy president, vice-president, permanent chairman and deputy permanent chairman were announced.

Counting was still going on for the contests for the 25 seats on the supreme council; the results will be announced tomorrow.

Election committee deputy chairman Tan Sri Abdul Kadir Yusof said tonight's results were announced late because a lot of time was taken in counting the votes for the vice-presidential contest, which required four recounts to ensure that the results tallied.

Polling of the Umno party elections at Dewan Merdeka in the Putra World Trade Centre here ended at 4.10pm today and counting began 20 minutes later.

The polling took about four hours, three hours in the morning and an hour after Friday prayers.

A total of 1,434 delegates from the divisions, 35 from the supreme council, five from Wanita Umno and five from Umno Youth cast their votes.

Forty-five polling booths were set up on both sides of the hall as well as on the stage.

As soon as the voting ended, all the ballot boxes were sealed.

Representatives of the candidates then accompanied the boxes to Dewan Tun Ismail where about 200 trainees from the Dusun Tua Youth Training Centre began the counting.

Earlier, when Datuk Musa was offered a "jeruk" (pickled fruit) by Dr Mahathir, the delegates broke into applause.

The assembly was adjourned shortly after the delegates returned from the afternoon tea break.

Many of the delegates attended a dinner at the Prime Minister's residence and followed the results over television.

After the opening of the assembly in the morning there was confusion over the number of delegates sent by Umno Youth. This was because one of the delegates, Encik Ghani Othman, was also a delegate of the Ledang division.

Earlier, Tan Sri Sulaiman had announced that Umno Youth had four delegates.

However, Encik Ghani later said that he was attending as an Umno Youth delegate and withdrawing as a delegate from Ledang.

This meant that of the 1,479 delegates to the assembly, 1,434 were from the 133 Umno divisions, 35 were in the supreme council and five each represented the Youth and Wanita movements.