

Mukhriz says 'Yes' to standing for Umno veep

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By Susan Loone

As the crowd walked into the hall, they met a large poster on both sides of the stage of Mukhriz Mahathir and the slogan 'Berani Berubah' below it.

True to the spirit of change, Mukhriz announced his candidacy for an Umno vice-presidency post at his official residence in Mentaloon, Kedah, today.

His decision was received with shouts of "Hidup Umno" and cheers from the crowd.

NONE Mukhriz (left) also endorsed PM Najib Abdul Razak and his deputy Muhyiddin Yassin as the best team to lead Umno.

He also announced a team of three candidates for supreme council members - Aziz Salim, Mahadzir Khalid and Jamil Khir Baharom.

Even before the event to announce the Umno election candidates begun, former Perlis MB Shahidan Kassim said he has been campaigning for Mukhriz.

"He should make his decision today. Prime Minister Najib Razak has said something and it might influence his decision but I will not tell you what is being said," he joked to a few reporters when he appeared to shake their hands.

Shahidan is also Perlis Umno chief and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department and his Arau division has placed their unanimous support behind Mukhriz.

Several pro-Umno bloggers including Zakir Mohammed, who runs the blog Big Dog, were present at the event, which was attended by several hundred people including some leaders from Penang, Perak, Johor, Terengganu and even Kelantan.

NONE Accompanying Mukhriz into the hall at about 5.15 pm were his supporters carrying placards with the words "Hidup Mukriz" and "Berani Berubah".

His entry was also accompanied by the blaring of patriotic song 'Inilah Barisan Kita'.

During his speech, Mukhriz said he arrived at his decision after much advice and suggestions from others, where for weeks, he had been confronted with the question "Will he offer himself for a post at the central leadership?"

He said he had thought the matter through and looked at every perspective while asking himself "Am I prepared" before offering himself for the VP post.

'Umno not a place for careerists'

"Since I became an Umno member, I only wished to give my service to the religion, race and the country," he said.

NONE "I have often reiterated that Umno is not a place for careerists or for those who want to accumulate wealth," he added.

"Umno is a platform to fight for the nation (wadah perjuangan bangsa). Every bit of knowledge that I have inside me, I will share to build the nation and country," he stressed.

Mukhriz denied that he ever planned to contest in a state seat in Kedah and neither had he arranged a strategy to become menteri besar, what more the state Umno chief.

However, as a party member, he must be ready and prepared to carry whatever responsibilities that come his way.

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