

Ahmad Ismail to stay out of politics for one year
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GEORGE TOWN – Former Bukit Bendera Umno chief Ahmad Ismail, who caused a stir with alleged racist remarks two years ago, will not contest the top post in the division meeting on Sunday.

He has instead decided to take a year's leave from politics.

"I made the decision on my own without being pressured by any quarters," he told a press conference here Thursday.

"I did meet with party president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at least five times to discuss ways to woo voters to support Barisan Nasional again."

Although he is not contesting the top post, Ahmad maintained he was still the de facto head of the division.

The division's annual delegates' meeting was twice postponed at the last minute and is now scheduled to be held on Sunday.

It is learnt that Ahmad was the sole person nominated to contest the division's top post when nominations closed on July 4.

Ahmad was suspended for three years from the party in September 2008, after he allegedly made racist remarks during the Permatang Pauh by-election campaign.

In November the same year, his supporters angered Gerakan when they tore photographs of party president Dr Koh Tsu Koon, who is also the Penang Barisan Nasional chief and the state's ousted chief minister.

Umno lifted Ahmad's suspension in December last year and subsequently, all 37 appointed and elected committee members of the division resigned en bloc to pave the way for his return. - The Star

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