

Dr M fails to get nominated as division delegate

JITRA: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad lost his bid to be elected as a Kubang Pasu Umno division delegate to the party's general assembly in November.

The former prime minister and Umno president emerged ninth in the list of 15 aspirants at the division's meeting at Dewan Wawasan here yesterday.

His son, Datuk Mukhriz, 42, however, was elected as one of the seven delegates to the assembly. He was fifth on the list. Mukhriz polled 289 votes while his father only managed 227 votes.

Dr Mahathir, who dominated Umno for more than two decades, had gone to the grassroots level to ask for an endorsement to speak at the party's general assembly but failed.

A total of 472 branch delegates attended the meeting which was opened by Menteri Besar Datuk Mahdzir Khalid.

Dr Mahathir had left for Kuala Lumpur by the time the results were announced by Datuk Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah, the chairman of the balloting process, at 5pm. Mukhriz slipped out minutes before the announcement.

Division chairman Datuk Mohd Johari Baharum, when met later, said Dr Mahathir should accept the decision of the members of the division which he had led for some 30 years until he retired in 2003.

"He has to accept the results. He has gone down to

contest as an ordinary Umno member and he must accept the decision of the members as an ordinary member too.

"Dr Mahathir did not get many nominations from the grassroots and the nominations he received were the work of outsiders," he said, without naming them.

Johari, who is Deputy Internal Security Minister, echoed the members' call to Dr Mahathir: "It is all over now and Tun (Dr Mahathir) should patch things with Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi."

Meanwhile, Mukhriz speaking at the family home in Titi Gajah here, blamed his father's defeat on the overwhelming influence on the delegates by the party headquarters, Kedah Umno and the Kubang Pasu division.

"It was a massive and unprecedented effort by them."

He said he had called his father to inform him of the results.

Asked what his father thought of the results, he said: "Tun and I are very disappointed, especially when he received thunderous applause each time the speakers mentioned his name and when he walked into the hall.

"Definitely; the support he received did not translate into winning votes for him."

Asked if his father had discussed his next course of action, he said: "You have to ask him that."

The question now is, what next for Dr Mahathir?