

Dr M to get assembly invite

By **CHOI TUCK WO** and **SHAHANAAZ HABIB**

HELSINKI: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has given an assurance that Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad will be invited to attend the Umno general assembly in November.

"We invitestly party members to the assembly. Tun has never been excluded," the Prime Minister said in reply to a question on whether the former prime minister would be invited

as a guest to the assembly following his failure to be elected as a delegate for the Kubang Pasu division.

On Dr Mahathir's role in Umno despite the setback, Abdullah said he was still serving in various capacities such as in the Eminent Persons Group for the OIC, Global Peace Forum, Proton, Petronas and other bodies.

Abdullah said all Umno members must support the party and ensure the success of its

struggles and policies laid down by the Barisan Nasional government.

"I've recently met with members of Mubarak (Council of former MPs) who told me they still want to continue, serving the people to the best of their abilities," he told Malaysian journalists after meeting his Polish counterpart Jaroslaw Kaczynski on the sidelines of the Sixth Asia-Europe (Asem 6) Summit which began yesterday.

Abdullah said it was the

party's aspiration that ail members, including those who had retired could serve the people even without holding any positions.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said in Kuala Lumpur that the decision of the Kubang Pasu Umno delegates should be accepted and respected by all.

"What's there to comment? It's very clear.

"The decision has been made by the delegates and we should

accept and respect their choice," said the deputy Umno president.

To a question on his view of the Kubang Pasu decision, he said: "I don't know unless you ask the delegates why they voted in such a way. Our reading here might be different from how the (Kubang Pasu) delegates perceive it. The best thing is to ask the delegates themselves."

Mahathir lost in his bid to become one of seven elected

delegates from his Kubang Pasu division to the general assembly. He wanted to use that platform to address his grievances with the Government and the leadership.

When asked if denying Dr Mahathir the platform to speak would pose an even bigger problem, Najib said, "We will manage it sap how."

He was speaking to reporters after opening the Bandar Tun Razak Umno division meeting.