

Mahathir fails to become a delegate

BY SIRA HABIBU,
TUNKU SHAHARIAH
AND NIRMALA ZAIN

ALOR STAR: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's bid to highlight his grievances with the Government in the coming Umno general assembly suffered a setback when he failed to be elected as a delegate for the Kubang Pasu division.

Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir said his father lost because of a campaign where delegates were told that they should not vote for Dr Mahathir if they loved him.

"My father could not help feeling disappointed with the result, especially after the encouraging welcome he received during the delegates conference.

"That is the norm in politics. People may show support, but they need not translate the support into votes," Mukhriz told a press conference at his family home in Titi Gajah here last evening.

Dr Mahathir lost in the election to choose seven delegates who will be representing the division at the Umno general assembly in November.

The seven who made it are division committee members Ahmad Hamid who garnered 317 votes, Shamsudin Ahmad (311), Mohd Fazli Abdul Halim (296), Shuib Din (292), Mukhriz (289), Zulfritri Yaakob (286), and Abdul Manaf Kechik (270).

Dr Mahathir clinched the ninth position with 227 votes. Of the 496 delegates, only 472 exercised their right to vote.

Mukhriz said division delegate elections had never attracted this much attention.

"This year the intensity of the campaigning increased 10-fold as the division, state and federal machineries were used to



FATHER AND SON: Mukhriz talking to Dr Mahathir during the lunch break at the Kubang Pasu Umno division annual delegates meeting yesterday.

campaign against my father.

"The outcome of the division delegate election raises questions as to whether the members have forgotten my father's contributions to the party and the country," he said.

Mukhriz said the time had come for members who felt that something had gone wrong to let their voices be heard.

Kubang Pasu division chief Datuk Johari Baharom said his team had tried pleading with Dr Mahathir to withdraw from the contest to save him the embarrassment of losing.

"We made-attempts to see Dr Mahathir but he refused to

meet us.

"We knew the delegates did not want Dr Mahathir to lower his status and stand as a delegate. He is a statesman. As a former president, he will be invited as a guest to the Umno general assembly," he said.

Meanwhile, in Sungai Petani, Datuk Mokhzani Mahathir was elected as a delegate to Umno's general assembly at the Merbok Umno division meeting.

Despite his victory, he expressed his deepest regret at how his father had been "let down" in his own constituency.

"My father was humiliated in His own constituency. What

happened at Kubang Pasu reflects how Umno treats its former leader," Mokhzani said.

He also said his victory in Merbok reflected the true feelings of party members "if they were allowed to vote freely".

This was the secondtime he was elected as a G7 member. (G7 is the term used to refer to the seven delegates elected by a division to attend the party's annual general assembly.)

Mokhzani garnered the most votes, securing 228, 39 more than Information Minister Datuk Zainuddin Maidin who is also the division's Information Bureau chief.