

Two-term V-P Hassan Ali pulls out of race

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KOTA BARU: Incumbent two-term Pas vice-president Datuk Dr Hassan Ali has decided not to seek re-election.

The party has three vice-presidents.

The party's election is tomorrow.

This means only Kelantan's Datuk Husam Musa and party activist Mohamad Sabu will seek re-election.

Selangor's Dr Hassan, a popular motivational speaker, could not be contacted for comment on his reasons not to contest.

His departure also means that Husam and Mohamad — both part of Pas' Young Turks who swept to power in the last party polls two years ago — will be up against three candidates representing the ulama (orthodox religious scholars): party information chief Ahmad Awang, central committee member and former Pas youth chief Mahfuz Omar and Dewan Ulama committee member and Johor Pas com-

missioner Datuk Dr Mahfodz Mohamad.

This will be Ahmad's second attempt, the third for Mahfuz and first for Mahfodz.

A party source said 15 people were nominated for the vice-president's posts but 12 declined.

The fate of the remaining five contenders will be decided by some 1,100 delegates from 171 divisions at the Pusat Tarbiyah Islamiah Kelantan (Putik) in Pengkalan Chepa.

"The number of people who qualified to contest the vice-presidency this time around is very high compared to previous Pas elections," said Datuk Mustafa Ali, former Pas vice-president, who now heads the party's general election preparations unit.

For the number two post, Dewan Ulama chief Datuk Harun Taib will challenge incumbent Nasharudin Mat Isa.

The duo's clash is seen as a symbolic fight between two rival forces in Pas.



Party president Datuk Seri Hadi Awang (left) with secretary-general Datuk Kamaruddin Jaafar at the press conference yesterday.

Nasharudin is said to represent the party's progressive faction while Harun represents the conservative segment.

Party president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang will be returned unopposed as he is the only one nominated for the

post.

A press conference here yesterday failed to provide much detail, with secretary-general Datuk Kamaruddin Jaafar disclosing only the positions which would see a contest.

"The party will only finalise

its list of candidates (last) night," he said, believed to provide room for eleventh-hour compromises among candidates.

Last night saw the opening of the Youth and Ulama assemblies, ahead of the full convention and election which

will take place over three days from tomorrow.

Youth chief Salahuddin Ayub — a prime mover of the Young Turks agenda — was returned unopposed to his post following the withdrawal of his challenger Idris Ahmad, who remained his deputy.