

# Ismail Sabri: No plans to quit politics

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**PETALING JAYA:** Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob has no intention to retire from politics yet as the former prime minister says he won the Bera Umno division chief uncontested and is still an elected representative.

Despite not seeking another term as a party vice-president in the party polls, the Bera MP said would continue to serve the voters in various capacities.

"I won the Bera division unopposed but will not be defending the vice-president's post.

"As I am still the Bera MP, I will continue to serve my constituents, so that does not allow me to quit politics for now," said Ismail Sabri when contacted.

He was asked to comment on a recent report which quoted sources as saying that he was "retiring from politics".

The assumption came following his decision not to defend his vice-president post.

The report was later retracted and an apology rendered to Ismail Sabri for incorrectly stating that the former premier was retiring from politics.

The nomination to contest in the party polls closed on Sunday.

Initially, there were eight candidates who filed their papers to contest the three vice-president posts but Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir decided to pull out at the eleventh hour.

It is said that the three vice-president posts has not been so hotly contested with big names in recent years.

Currently, the contenders included ministers to former ministers and mentris besar.

They are incumbents Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid and Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, as well as Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican, Datuk Seri Azalina

Othman Said, Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani, Datuk Seri Hasni Mohammad and Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail.

Separately, Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Ahmad Maslan thanked Ismail Sabri for his contributions to the party following his decision to stay out.

"I believe his decision not to defend the post was because he has reached the highest point of his political career.

"Now, he will be together with several other former prime ministers," Ahmad said.

Meanwhile, Zambry said he decided to withdraw from the contest following a discussion with the party leadership.

"As the Foreign Minister, I have many responsibilities and there is a lot on my plate.

"I am also Barisan Nasional secretary-general and want to focus on strengthening relations among component parties, as well as among Barisan and other parties in

the unity government," he said.

Umno is in the midst of its internal elections for the 191 divisions and 22,000 branches, including divisions that were suspended.

The party's new office bearers will be elected from Feb 1 to March 18 but the top two positions of president and deputy president will not be contested this time.

Elections for the three vice-presidents as well as for supreme council positions will be on March 18.

In May last year, Umno amended its constitution to allow party polls to be held within six months after the conclusion of the 15th General Election.

Umno had postponed its party elections for 18 months after the 2018/2021 term ended on June 30, 2021, which meant party polls for the 2021/2023 term should have been held before Dec 30 last year.

However, the polls were postponed.