

PM: Dr M free to attend assembly

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KUALA LUMPUR: Former Umno president Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has every right to be picked as a delegate to the party general assembly in November.

Party president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the supreme council had discussed the matter and concluded that it would be up to the Kubang Pasu Umno division to decide whether the former Prime Minister should become a delegate.

Dr Mahathir, who helmed the division when he was Prime Minister and Umno president, is now

an ordinary member.

"If he is a delegate, then he is welcome to attend the assembly in that capacity," the Prime Minister said after chairing a four-hour supreme council meeting at Menara Dato' Onn last night.

Dr Mahathir had voiced his intention to become a delegate so that he could raise concerns over the running of the country at the assembly.

On Dr Mahathir attending the assembly, Abdullah said he would not have any problem meeting him there.

To a question on whether he would shake Dr Mahathir's hands, Abdullah said he had never failed to do so.

Dr Mahathir had also indicated his interest to address the assembly, to which Abdullah replied that as speakers would normally be picked by the State Umno liaison committees, he was leaving the matter to Kedah Umno.

Abdullah was also asked on Dr Mahathir's request that the Official Secrets Act not be invoked against him for revealing documents purportedly showing the

Government was the first to offer sand and air space to Singapore over the bridge deal.

"If he has such documents, he can submit them to us," he said.

When pressed whether the Government would give a written assurance on the matter as sought by Dr Mahathir, Abdullah questioned how such documents could come into the possession of the former Prime Minister.

On party matters, Abdullah said no problems had been reported in the divisional meetings held so far.