

# Division invites Dr M to open AGM

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**KANGAR:** The Padang Besar Umno division is giving former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad a platform to speak, inviting him to open the division's annual general meeting next month.

Division chief Datuk Zahidi Zainul Abidin said it was better for Umno to provide the platform for Dr Mahathir so as to stop the opposition from capitalising on controversial issues.

"I want to make it clear that Tun Dr Mahathir is a true Umno leader. He must be respected. He is an internationally acclaimed leader. He is a fighter for Third World countries," he said yesterday.

"He deserves a chance to speak on an Umno platform. We do not want the opposition to take advantage of the current situation."

Zahidi, who is also Beseri assemblyman, said this when asked to comment

on the division's decision to invite Dr Mahathir to open the division's AGM on Aug 27.

Dr Mahathir had made headlines recently after criticising his successor Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"There is nothing controversial about inviting a respectable statesman to open division meetings," he said, adding that Dr Mahathir had told him that he had no objection to accepting the invitation.

"Furthermore, Umno members and folks in Padang Besar have been longing to see Dr Mahathir in person on their turf.

"We have always wanted to invite Dr Mahathir to open our meetings when he was prime minister. But he was understandably very busy.

"But now we finally have a chance to invite him."



Zahidi: 'There is nothing controversial about inviting a respectable statesman to open a division meeting'