

0895

U E944 AAE ENG MES  
GHAFAR-SUCCESSOR R'R'R'  
BM

SKUDAI; DEC 31 (BERNAMA) -- DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER GHAFAR BABA SAID HE PREFERS DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TO CONTINUE BEING PRIME MINISTER AS LONG AS HE IS ABLE TO.

+ I PRAY THAT HE LIVES LONG AND WOULD LEAD THE GOVERNMENT AS LONG AS HE CAN AND I WILL ALWAYS BACK HIM AS PRIME MINISTER,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS HERE TODAY.

HE WAS COMMENTING ON DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR'S STATEMENT THAT ENCIK GHAFAR WILL SUCCEED HIM AS UMNO PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER.

IN A YEAR-END INTERVIEW WITH THE LOCAL MEDIA EARLY LAST WEEK, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WOULD CONTINUE TO LEAD THE GOVERNMENT AS LONG AS THE PEOPLE NEEDED HIS SERVICES AND DEPENDING ON HIS ABILITY TO DELIVER THE GOODS.

ENCIK GHAFAR SAID HE THANKED DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR FOR THE HONOUR OF NAMING HIM HIS SUCCESSOR.-- MORE

1614MST 31 12 89  
0900

U E946 AAE ENG MES  
GHAFAR-SUCCESSOR 2 SKUDAI R'R'R'

ENCIK GHAFAR DESCRIBED DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR AS A MATURED LEADER WHO HAD MADE MALAYSIA WELL-KNOWN INTERNATIONALLY TODAY.

MEANWHILE, UMNO SECRETARY-GENERAL DATUK MOHAMED RAHMAT TODAY SAID THE QUESTION OF WHO WOULD BE DEPUTY TO ENCIK GHAFAR NEED NOT BE RAISED AS DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HAD ALREADY NAMED HIS SUCCESSOR.

WHEN OPENING THE PULAI UMNO DIVISION WORK CAMP AND ELECTION ORIENTATION HERE, DATUK MOHAMED SAID ALL SECTORS MUST RESPECT THE DECISION AND WOULD NOT QUESTION IT ANYMORE.

HE SAID HE FULLY SUPPORTED THE STATEMENT BY DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR DURING THE INTERVIEW THAT THE PARTY'S TRADITION MUST BE PRESERVED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HAD SAID THAT ACCORDING TO UMNO'S TRADITION, THE PRIME MINISTER'S SUCCESSOR IS HIS DEPUTY IN THE PARTY.-- MORE

1630MST 31 12 89  
0902

U E947 AAE ENG MES  
GHAFAR-SUCCESSOR 3 SKUDAI R'R'R'

DATUK MOHAMED SAID LET UMNO LEADERS AND MEMBERS DECIDE ON WHO IS TO BE THE DEPUTY TO ENCIK GHAFAR.

HE SAID ALL PARTIES NEED NOT DISCUSS THE POSITION OF THE NUMBER TWO AS HE FEARED THIS COULD CAUSE DISUNITY.

+WE CANNOT GO THROUGH THIS PROCESS BECAUSE FACTIONS AND COMLOTS IN UMNO WILL ONLY WEAKEN THE PARTY,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID THE PARTY'S MAIN TASK NOW WAS TO CONSOLIDATE UMNO'S POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS SO THAT IT COULD MUSTER THE STRENGTH TO RUN THE NATION.-- BERNAMA

1637MST 31 12 89