

Dr M says succession will be easier

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THE newly-elected second echelon of young leaders comprising deputy president and vice-presidents will make succession in the party much easier, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Umno president said that succession would be a problem if those next in line were older, but added that the new leaders "are not exactly that young."

He remembered that Tun Abdul Razak was "very young" when he was appointed deputy president.

"The delegates had made a wise choice," he told a press conference at the end of the first day of the general assembly.

The votes, he said, had been fairly distributed and the nominations had been reflected in the voting trend.

"A lot of people who did not campaign very hard or do too much also got elected," he added.

Asked whether there would be a Cabinet reshuffle following the

changes in the Umno leadership, Dr Mahathir replied:

"I am not bound by the results of this election. I can if I want to, but I can also ignore the results."

On the style of politicking in Umno, Dr Mahathir said that to a certain extent it had changed but was not very much different from before.

He said that even during the days of Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Razak, harsh words had also been uttered during campaigns.

Dr Mahathir advised the newly-elected leaders to work together, adding that he had given that advice even before the polls.

"Party unity," he said, "will remain strong despite the intense campaigning."

Umno Youth head Tan Sri Rahim Tamby Chik said the party president's position would become stronger with the election of the Wawasan Team.

He said the team of vice-presidents would carry out the mandate of

the delegates.

Describing the team as the best, Rahim said that fulfilling the responsibilities entrusted by the party would be its main priority.

Newly elected supreme council member, Sabah Umno chief Tan Sri Sakaran Dandai was confident that changes in the leadership would bring good tidings for the people of Sabah.

"I am sure Sabahans will accept the new leadership with a sense of hope that it will bring some changes to Sabah," he said.

Wanita deputy chief Datuk Napsiah Omar said she was happy that delegates decided to give her the mandate to serve in the supreme council.

"I will carry out the responsibility that was entrusted to me to consolidate the party," she said.

She was glad that the two other Wanita candidates — Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman and Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail — were also elected.