

03 MAY 1999

Najib-Power

MAHATHIR DECIDED ON HANDING OVER POWER AFTER DEEP THOUGHT - NAJIB

ALOR SETAR, May 3 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's decision to hand over the prime minister's post to his deputy after the next general election must have been made after thorough consideration, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today.

"It is the tradition that the deputy prime minister succeeds the prime minister when the latter steps down," he said when asked to comment on Dr Mahathir's statement in Friday's edition of "Mainichi Shimbun" on the matter.

The Japanese daily quoted Dr Mahathir as saying he would make way for Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi when the latter was ready. Yesterday, the prime minister said this could happen in "one year, two years, three years or even four years...after the general election".

Speaking to reporters here, Najib expressed support for Dr Mahathir's actions which were appropriate for the nation.

Najib, who is education minister, had earlier held a meeting with Kedah educationists at Wisma Darul Aman.

He reminded teachers not to abuse their positions by raising political issues in the classroom.

"The terms and conditions of the teaching profession clearly state that political issues cannot be touched on at all in the classroom," he said.

Najib said not many teachers were involved in activities like distributing membership forms of an opposition party and criticising the government in the classroom.

Only one or two teachers in any school resorted to such activities while most others did not support these actions, he said.

Najib said while the government's General Orders permitted primary school teachers to hold posts in political parties, they were only allowed to participate in political activities outside school hours.

"It's their right to get involved in politics outside school hours for primary school teachers, but they are reminded never to bring political issues to the school," he said.

On today's meeting, Najib said it was to remind teachers that the school was a place to provide education for youngsters.

More than 5,000 teachers and state and district education officials attended the meeting. Also present was Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid.

-- BERNAMA

MZM SK