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MAHATHIR CONFIDENT UMNO WILL BACK ABDULLAH AS HIS SUCCESSOR

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he reckoned Umno will back party vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as his successor for the party leadership.

"Of course, if I step down (Deputy Prime Minister) Datuk Abdullah (Ahmad Badawi) will take over," he said.

Dr Mahathir was asked about succession of the Umno leadership at a press conference after launching the millennium commemorative gold coin at the Palace of the Golden Horses here.

"But I think Umno will back Datuk Abdullah as my successor," he said.

Abdullah is performing the function of a deputy president since September last year.

On whether the Umno general assembly would be forwarded from the first half to the first quarter of next year, Dr Mahathir said it was still too early to consider that.

"They haven't considered anything at all. I think they have plenty of time...we can take our time," he said.

Bank Negara today unveiled the limited edition coin made of 999.9 solid gold which have a legal value of RM500.

The coin, designed and produced by Mariwasa Kraftangan, will be minted for a limited run of only 10,000 specimens and will retail at RM2,000 at selected banks or directly from the company.

-- BERNAMA

GHZ RYN