

# Dr M does it his way

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. PM to stay on until  
October next year

. Abdullah to take over  
in smooth transition

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who abruptly announced his resignation on Saturday, has agreed to stay on till October next year to ensure a smooth transition of power to his successor Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

During the handover period, Mahathir will continue to hold all his government posts, including that of finance minister, while remaining Umno president and Barisan Nasional chairman.

Abdullah, who is deputy prime minister, will be acting prime minister and acting Umno president whenever Mahathir is on leave and during the two months' leave that he had asked for.

Mahathir will finally relinquish his posts after chairing the meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in Kuala Lumpur in October next year.

The transition plan was spelt out in a statement issued by the Umno Supreme Council after its special meeting yesterday chaired by Abdullah. At a packed press conference later, party secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaacob read out the two-page statement (*full text on Page 2*).

Mahathir dropped his bombshell that he was resigning from his posts in Umno and BN on live television on Saturday evening during his closing speech at the end of the three-day Umno general assembly. Party leaders refused to accept his resignation and later said that he had retracted it.

He left for a holiday in Naples, Italy, on Sunday.

The special meeting was held to discuss the report of the Umno management committee which met Mahathir at Seri Perdana on Sunday before his departure.

The committee was given the mandate by the supreme council at its meeting on Saturday night to discuss a compromise formula

to ask Mahathir to continue to lead Umno and the government during the transitional period.

At the press conference yesterday, the three vice-presidents and Wanita and Umno Youth heads pledged support for Abdullah and declared their respect for Mahathir's wishes.

"Should anyone assume that once Mahathir is not around, there will be chaos and disunity, I think this will not happen considering the solidarity demonstrated during the meeting today," Abdullah said.

He said before the meeting, all state liaison chairmen consisting of mentris besar and chief ministers have met among themselves and expressed their support for the decision.

"I am very touched with the supreme council's support for Mahathir's wish for me to be the successor," he said, adding that there will be a smooth transition from now until the OIC Summit in October next year.