

Najib supports delaying Umno polls

KUALA LUMPUR: Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday supports putting off next year's party elections to after the next general election.

He said this would be the best move to prevent jostling for posts and enable the party to focus on preparing for the general election.

"Personally I fully support the move to postpone Umno elections," he said when asked to comment on yesterday's statement by Prime Minister Datuk

Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also Umno president, that the party elections would be deferred.

Najib, who is Defence Minister, was speaking at a news conference after receiving, on behalf of his ministry, the Eagle ARV intelligence and reconnaissance aircraft from Composites Technology Research Malaysia at the Subang air force base.

The current term of the Umno supreme council members expires in June next year while the next general elec-

tion must be held by the end of 2004.

The Umno constitution allows the term of supreme council members to be extended by up to 18 months.

Asked on Mahathir's statement yesterday that he (Najib) is the most qualified person to assume the deputy prime minister's post, the defence minister broke into a smile and said there was no need for him to comment on the matter now.

"Not now, not now. Thank you," he said.