

PM to inform Umno soon

STAR 15 SEP 2002

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to inform a special Umno supreme council meeting at the end of this month about his intention not to seek re-election at the next polls, scheduled in 2004.

Umno executive secretary Datuk Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor said the Sept 30 special meeting was to discuss the use of English in the teaching of Science and Mathematics.

However, party secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said the Prime Minister was expected to touch on his decision not to stand in the next general election.

He said he believed Dr Ma-

hathir's decision should be respected.

The Umno president and MP for Kubang Pasu announced his intention at a meet-the-people gathering in Alor Star on Friday and, at another function in Bukit Kayu Hitam, he said he had yet to relay his intention to the council.

Speaking after bidding farewell to Philippine Defence Secretary Angelo Reyes, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said he hoped Dr Mahathir would continue to contribute and guide the party and the nation even after he was no longer politically active.

Najib said he was sad about the Prime Minister's decision

but added: "We have to respect his wish because he has thought about it at length and is quite firm on the matter."

Another Umno vice-president, Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib, said it was a decision that everyone - including senior party leaders - must respect and uphold.

"If he wishes to retire as the Kubang Pasu MP, then it is his wish. We respect that. Dr Mahathir is a man of wisdom and he knows what he is doing," Muhammad said when contacted yesterday.

He hoped that the Prime Minister, who is also head of the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition, would continue to contribute, in whatever way he

could, to the country, Umno and the Barisan.

In Kuantan, Pahang Umno chief Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob said he hoped Dr Mahathir would contest in the Umno elections in 2004.

This was because his leadership was still needed to steer the Barisan to another victory in the general election.

"If it is possible, I want to appeal to Dr Mahathir to reconsider his decision because his wisdom is much needed not only for the party but also the country.

"The combination of Dr Mahathir and his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will be the best team to lead the Barisan to another win and

bring it to greater heights," Adnan, who is Pahang Menteri Besar, said at his official residence in Jalan Teluk Sisek here yesterday.

Parti Keadilan Nasional secretary-general Sahri Bahari said Dr Mahathir's decision not to contest in the polls was "not a surprise move."

"It is a move to ease a doubt which he had planted in the minds of the people when he said he would quit all posts by October next year," he said.

Sahri said if Dr Mahathir was serious about his intention, he should resign as the Finance Minister and allow a new Finance Minister to announce the 2003 Budget.