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Leaders relieved by Dr M's final decision

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Political leaders heaved a sigh of relief over the announcement that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had agreed to remain as Umno president and Barisan Nasional chairman, insisting that his services were very much needed by the nation.

Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik urged leaders of Barisan Nasional's component parties not to impose unnecessary demands on the Prime Minister from now on.

Dr Lim said as a medical doctor, he believed fatigue and a bit of frustration caused the Prime Minister to announce his resignation.

He also urged those in charge of scheduling the Prime Minister's programmes and appointments to lighten Dr Mahathir's workload.

"Dr Mahathir is a person who never stops working, but we need to force him to rest a bit more by reducing his workload and toning down his hectic schedule."

The Gerakan Penang State Delegates Conference 2002 unanimously passed an emergency resolution tabled by State party chairman Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

The resolution fully appreciating the tremendous contributions of the Prime Minister in the process of nation-building, pledged full support for Dr Mahathir to continue leading the nation in facing various challenges both domestically and internationally, and in laying a solid foundation for achieving national unity and Vision 2020.

In Ipoh, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, in expressing relief at Dr Mahathir's retraction of his resignation, called on all Malaysians to give the Prime Minister their undivided support.

"We all need Dr Mahathir to lead us to 2020, we need his guidance and leadership. It is not yet time for him to resign," he said.

In Malacca, the State Umno and BN expressed their wholehearted support for Dr Mahathir's leadership, saying that he should remain the leader of the party and coalition as the country still needed his guidance.

Umno Supreme Council member and State BN chief Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam said the State Umno liaison committee which met at 3am this morning expressed its undivided support for Dr Mahathir.

In Kuala Lumpur, Umno Youth pledged its solid support and loyalty to Dr Mahathir, and its deputy head Datuk Abdul Aziz Sheikh Fadzir said the movement wants Dr Mahathir at the helm to preserve stability in Umno and the country.

He said Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein was trying to arrange for a meeting with Dr Mahathir to convey the Youth wing's solid support for his leadership.

People's Progressive Party president Datuk M. Kayveas said the Prime Minister must stay on to see the Government's new policies through and ensure a smooth succession.

"We know that it's a matter of time before he leaves. But we want him to stay on for a little while longer. At least until after the next general election."

In Shah Alam, Selangor Umno unanimously passed a resolution supporting Dr Mahathir, and State Umno chief Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo said members wanted Dr Mahathir to continue leading the party and nation as his leadership was still needed.

In Seremban, the State Umno expressed its sincere thanks to Dr Mahathir

for withdrawing his resignation from his political posts and Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad said the State Umno, which held a special meeting to discuss the matter today, felt the withdrawal was a great relief to all Malaysians.

In Kota Baru, Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat said Dr Mahathir could continue as Prime Minister but he should make an effort to befriend Pas.

"Pas has been struggling for the Islamic cause for 50 years and Dr Mahathir himself has declared that Malaysia is an Islamic country. It is better for us to be friends and it will ease part of his burden," he said.

Umno supreme council member Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said Dr Mahathir's decision to withdraw his quit decision would inject new spirit in Umno members and supporters, including those in Kelantan.

"He is a great leader. His statement to resign certainly has great implications. He must have thought of quitting for a long time after careful consideration," he said.

In Seremban, putting aside political differences, DAP lifetime advisor Dr Chen Man Hin joined all Malaysians to appeal to Dr Mahathir to continue leading the nation.

"I don't see why Dr Mahathir has to resign now as I feel he should continue his contributions to the nation. He has done well in lifting Malaysia out of the recent economic crisis without any outside help and succeeded in clamping down on all forms of terrorism in the country."

In Penang, Umno supreme council member and Penang Liaison Committee deputy chairman Datuk Dr Hilmi Yahaya said Umno members were shell-shocked when Dr Mahathir announced his intention to quit.

"We were not prepared for it. Dr Mahathir caught us by surprise," said Dr Hilmi, who is also the State Deputy Chief Minister.

Dr Hilmi said he would chair a State Liaison Committee meeting tomorrow to discuss the issue and adopt a resolution to give full backing to Dr Mahathir's leadership.

In Kota Kinabalu, the Sabah Progressive Party expressed support for Dr Mahathir to continue to lead the country, adding that only the fair leadership, wisdom and strength of Dr Mahathir could steer the country in overcoming all challenges, both internally and externally.

Sabah BN chairman Datuk Karim Bujang said the people needed Dr Mahathir to lead them and added the people were not ready to see the Prime Minister leave.

In Kuching, the four component parties of the BN gave their whole-hearted support to the continued political and Government leadership of Dr Mahathir.

Chief Minister and Parti Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu president Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud said PBB gave its full support to Dr Mahathir's decision to withdraw his resignation as BN chairman and Umno president.

Taib, together with PBB deputy presidents Tan Sri Alfred Jabu and Datuk Seri Abang Johari Tun Abang Openg and other senior party members, then punched the air and shouted "Hidup Mahathir" after the opening of the PBB Asajaya divisional meeting at Asajaya township near here.

Sarawak National Party (Snap), which held its national council today, passed a resolution in support of Dr Mahathir's continued leadership.

Bintulu MP Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing, in tabling the resolution, said Malaysia still needed the services of Dr Mahathir to lead the nation and Government.

Sarawak United People's Party, in a statement, said it was relieved that Dr Mahathir had retracted his decision to resign.

"His strong leadership is very much needed by the people and the country, especially at this critical juncture of globalisation," it said

in a statement.

Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak also echoed the opinion of the all the State BN component parties, voicing their pleasure that Dr Mahathir had retracted his resignation.

Party president Datuk Amar Leo Moggie Irok said the PBDS supreme council had unanimously passed a resolution calling on Dr Mahathir to continue to lead the country and the BN.

In Jitra, Members of Umno Kubang Pasu urged Dr Mahathir, who is their MP, to continue to lead the party and the country.

Mohammad said the expression on the delegates' faces and their reaction to the surprise announcement should convince the Prime Minister that he is still loved and needed.

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