

13 SEP 2002

RESPECT DR MAHATHIR'S DECISION, SAYS NAJIB

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 13 (Bernama) -- All Umno members should respect Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's decision not to contest in the next general election, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today.

He said the prime minister must have given a lot of thought to the matter before making a decision.

"We have to respect the prime minister in this matter although we want him to continue to lead the nation and party," said Najib, who is Defence Minister.

He was speaking to reporters after meeting Philippine Defence Secretary Angelo Reyes who is on a four-day visit to Malaysia.

He was asked to comment on Dr Mahathir's announcement today that he would not be contesting in the next general election.

Meanwhile, in KOTA KINABALU, Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Chong Kah Kiat also said that everyone should respect Dr Mahathir's decision when asked for comment after presenting prizes to winners of the Optimist sailing event of the Malaysia Games (Sukma).

-- BERNAMA

MHI AZZ JS JK