

Dr M: Stop making offers to resign

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called on Umno leaders and members to stop saying they are willing to step down from their posts.

The Umno president said the media had misunderstood him when he said on Sunday that it would be good if all leaders resign so that his deputy had the chance to "re-arrange" everything and make fresh appointments.

"I did not ask anyone to resign now. What I said was when it is time for the new leader (Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi) to take over and hold elections, there is a possibility that he might want to drop some of the current faces.

"So everyone should be willing to step down. This does not mean everyone in the current line-up will be dropped," he said after the supreme council meeting yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said the party would not drop elected representatives as candidates just because they were old or had served for a long time.

"If they do work, we will retain them," he said.

Touching on peoples religious schools (*sekolah agama rakyat*), Dr Mahathir said the Government's move not to fund them was to "save" the students from incorrect teachings of Islam that were being taught in the private schools.

The Prime Minister said the Government wanted Muslims to remain brothers and not fight each other.

He added that the Government was now looking into ways of improving the curriculum and teaching of Islamic education in national schools so that students had a proper understanding of the religion.

In Malacca earlier, Dr Mahathir said the Government always took into consideration the views and feelings of the people before deciding on new policy.

He said the Government would not implement something without proper planning or without considering the

world climate to ensure its success.

The Prime Minister also advised workers not to ask for salary increases unless the request was tied to higher productivity.

"We are trying hard to maintain our competitiveness. It is important that workers realise that unless an increase in salary is followed by higher productivity, we will lose our competitive edge," he said in his speech at the opening of the Honda Malaysia production plant.