

# Dr M: Support Abdullah

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## Continue with spirit and zest, Mahathir tells members

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in his last address as Umno president to the general assembly, has asked members to give the same kind of support they showed him to Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Saying that the party is now strong, Dr Mahathir said he would pray that members continue with the spirit and zest they had shown for the party yesterday.

On the pledge made by the Umno vice-presidents that they would respect Abdullah's choice of a deputy when he took over as the leader, Dr Mahathir said he was happy to hear there would not be a jostling for posts.

"I really fear if there is a fight because we do not yet understand the etiquette of democracy," he said when making his closing speech at the end of the party's 54th General Assembly.

He added that the proper way in a contest was that the loser would accept the decision, but the reality here was that sometimes, the candidate who lost was so disappointed that he caused "disturbances" in the party.

"If we abide by the decision, our party will be safe," he said.

Where there is a contest, all candidates should give the assurance that they would support whoever won, he said.

On the general election, he said that when a candidate is named, he should be accepted and that there is "no need to send delegation or appeal letters" against the decision.

Instead, party members should work hard to ensure his victory because it was a win for the party, religion and country.

Dr Mahathir, who has been party president for 22 years and is expected to hand over the reins to Abdullah in four months, praised the assembly for being orderly.



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He said he valued the appreciation the speakers had given him, even though at times he had poked fun at it.

"Although I sometimes make fun when the speakers address me with the title YDK, Yang DiKasihi (The

Beloved), I really appreciate it because I believe it is directed at the party president.

"And if the president of the party is not loved by members, then that is a sign that the party will split," he said.

"So when members voice their love to the president, this means they love the party and its struggles for the race, religion and country.

"So continue this practice to the incoming president," he said.

Last year, Dr Mahathir shocked the nation when he announced his decision to resign but following many appeals, he agreed to stay on until October.

Dr Mahathir said that in making his decision to step down, he had heeded the advice of his late mother.

"She told me when you are still enjoying the food, you should stop. So I followed her advice and made the decision to stop when I am still wanted.

"Don't stay until you are chased out, don't quit when you are no longer popular or when you have destroyed the party," he said.

Dr Mahathir also noted that delegates this time were not all that critical of the party and government policies.

He said that while criticism was often necessary to right something that was wrong, at times criticism aired at the assembly was used by the opposition as "ammunition" to attack Umno.

"So while you criticise, give a thought (to) whether it is constructive or not. Do not give ammunition to the opposition," he said.

He also appealed to Malays not to take the easy way out, adding that they should work hard to improve their lot and the race.

He also urged them to pay up all their loans because a failure to do this would tarnish the good name of the Malays.