

# 'Make way for younger leaders'

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Heads of Barisan Nasional and opposition parties who have led their parties for a considerable period should make way for younger leaders, Malaysian Democratic Party secretary-general Wee Choo Keong said.

He singled out MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, 67, Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, 64, and Parti Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu chief Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, 67, as leaders who should give the younger leaders a chance.

"The changing of the guard has started with Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad readily passing the baton to his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi despite being at the peak of his political career.

"Barisan component leaders should get the message by now as the country's leadership transition has started and a new political landscape will soon emerge," he added.

He said both Keng Yaik and Samy were elected president in 1980 while Taib had headed the PBB for 22 years.

Wee, a lawyer, said the MCA had kept the transition momentum with Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, 60, and Datuk Seri Lim Ah Lek, 61, resigning from their posts to make way for Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, 47, and Datuk Chan Kong Choy, 48, respectively.

He said Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak president Datuk Leo Moggie, 60, had stepped down from the top post but questioned the rationale in letting

his deputy, Datuk Daniel Tajem, who is a year older, to take over instead of letting the delegates decide at the party polls.

Wee also rapped the DAP, saying its chairman Lim Kit Siang, 62, continued to be the most powerful person in the party although he had given up his secretary-general's post.

"Kit Siang has asked almost every Barisan leader including Dr Mahathir to step down, at point or another, but he clings on to the party post. He is probably the longest serving party chief.

"He is depriving younger DAP leaders from leading the party and giving the party a fresh breath of life," he said, adding that Kit Siang was secretary-general for 30 years from 1969 to 1999,

**STAR 2 - JUL 2003**