

# PM a 'mentor and friend'

## Pak Lah: He has given us confidence in ourselves

BY LAM LI STAR 11/10/03

**KUALA LUMPUR:** A mentor and a concerned friend - that is how Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi describes what Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad means to him on a personal level.

He said he had learnt a lot from the Prime Minister.

Dr Mahathir, he said, was one of the greatest leaders of Malaysia, who had a profound passion to improve people's lives.

"I have known him for more than 30 years. I had been appointed as minister in the first Cabinet he formed and I remained in his Cabinet until today, except for three years and 10 months.

"I would like to refer to that period as a sabbatical period. The Prime Minister had let me learnt my politics all over again before re-appointing me," he told some 200 people gathered at the launch of a coffee table book on Dr Mahathir, entitled *22 Years 22 Voices*, at a hotel here yesterday.

Abdullah said the Prime Minister was also a man of compassion and who showed great concern for friends.

"He would always ask me: 'How is (Datin Paduka Seri) Endon (Mahmood) doing? How is she coping?'

"He showed great concern for my

wife, who is undergoing cancer treatment at the moment," he said.

Abdullah also praised the Prime Minister for instilling confidence among the people.

"In the last two decades, he has nurtured and cajoled us to believe that we are capable of achieving greater things.

"The evidence of his contributions is everywhere. Now what we need to do is build on the foundation he has laid."

Abdullah penned the forward for the book, which traced the prime minister's 22 years at the helm of the country through the medium of photography.

The 188-page book also contained memoirs and tributes to Dr Mahathir from heads of government and leaders in the political, business and academic fields within and outside the country.

They include Cuban President Fidel Castro, French President Jacques Chirac, King of Morocco Mohammed VI, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The ceremony was attended by ministers, officials from foreign embassies and corporate figures.

The book is priced at RM188.