

A picture is not worth speculating on: DPM

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KUALA LUMPUR: As the retirement day of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad draws nearer, the question on everyone's lips is, who will be Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's deputy.

Some quarters have made known their preference, through a painting on a piece of wall near the entrance to the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC).

The painting depicts Abdullah, and Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Tun Razak.

Abdullah, however, was quick to put an end to such speculation. "That's just the artist's impression," he said simply.

Abdullah said Umno members should not make predictions based on a painting. He also said he did not influence the artist in any way.

The deputy prime minister was speaking to reporters after attending the opening of the 50th general assembly of the People's Progressive Party by Mahathir here.

Najib, the defence minister, is wide-

ly tipped to be the country's number two, by virtue of his seniority in government and his popularity in Umno.

Mahathir himself had mentioned Najib several times when asked about the soon-to-be vacant deputy prime minister's position.

However, Mahathir had stressed that the choice will be Abdullah's alone.

Whether life imitates art will remain to be seen when Abdullah names his new cabinet, probably next week.