

30 OCT 2003

Abdullah-Umno

ABDULLAH ACTING UMNO PRESIDENT FROM 3PM TOMORROW

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 30 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will be acting Umno President from 3pm tomorrow when Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad steps down as Prime Minister and from all party posts.

Dr Mahathir announced this after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting at the party headquarters here today.

"Abdullah will hold the post when I resign at 3pm tomorrow. The post of acting president is in line with Clause 9.9 of the Umno Constitution," he said.

Abdullah would also be acting Umno treasurer, a post held by Dr Mahathir.

This was also in line with party tradition, said Dr Mahathir who chaired the Umno Supreme Council meeting for the last time as party president.

Clause 9.9 of the Umno Constitution states "If the president steps down, the deputy president will act in that post until the general assembly is held to elect the new president."

Also present at the media conference were Abdullah, Umno Secretary-General Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob and the three vice presidents --- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Tan Sri Muhammad Haji Muhammad Taib.

Dr Mahathir said the question of appointing an acting deputy president did not arise at present as there was no provision for this in the constitution.

"Under the constitution, the supreme council has the right to decide on certain matters if there is no provision pertaining to these matters," he added.

Abdullah meanwhile said that on behalf of all Umno Supreme Council members he had expressed grateful thanks to Dr Mahathir at the meeting.

"We appreciate his exemplary leadership," said Abdullah who will be sworn in as Malaysia's fifth Prime Minister tomorrow at Istana Negara.

He noted that Dr Mahathir through his views and advice was determined that Umno which was the backbone of the Barisan Nasional should continue to struggle for even bigger success.

Umno should also struggle for continued unity among the people and for development not only for the Malays but also for all Malaysians, Abdullah said.

"On behalf of everyone present I reiterated that our political approach which has been effective so long will continue to be adopted," he said.

"I told Datuk Seri, even though Datuk Seri has retired, we will continue your struggle. God willing we will be successful," Abdullah said.

He said Umno Supreme Council members wished Dr Mahathir happy retirement and expressed the hope he would enjoy good health and wellbeing.

Dr Mahathir wanted Umno members to support Abdullah and ensure that the party functioned well.

Dr Mahathir also pledged to continue working for the party's success to return the favour to the party which elected him as its president and with it provided him with the post of Prime Minister.

"I will help in the election campaigns. Even when there is no election I will meet with Umno members and the Malays to strengthen their support for the party," Dr Mahathir pledged.

Touching on Umno's struggle, Dr Mahathir said the party was moderate in

its struggle and only Umno struggled for the Malays and for Islam in this country.

"We are the ones who gave the Malays their rightful place and enabled them to redeem their dignity. We restored the honour of Islam and showed how good is the religion of Islam," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Umno would continue with the policies laid down by its leaders right from Datuk Onn Jaafar, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, Tun Razak and Tun Hussein Onn.

He said the policy determined by the Tunku had much influence on the Umno struggle.

"The Tunku's principle was Umno should be together with the other races and other parties and not take all for itself. It should be willing to share, work with other races and have an administration which is just to all races," he said.

Notwithstanding this, Dr Mahathir said Umno should defend the interests of the Malays and other Bumiputeras and give them their place in the national economy.

-- BERNAMA

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