

06 APR 2003

Nazri-Najib

CHENDEROH UMNO BACKS NAJIB FOR DPM'S POST - NAZRI

LENGGONG (Perak), April 6 (Bernama) -- Chenderoh Umno division today expressed support for party vice-president and Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to be elevated to deputy president and be appointed Deputy Prime Minister in October.

Division chief Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz said his division was of the view that Najib was the most qualified to become the Deputy Prime Minister as he was one of the longest serving cabinet ministers and had wide experience.

Najib was eligible to replace Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who would helm the country's leadership after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad retires in October, he told reporters after Najib opened the division's delegates meeting, here.

He said his division made the stand as Umno divisions would not be called to vote to decide on who would be the Number Two man in the government.

The post would be filled by appointment by the incoming Prime Minister, said Nazri, who is Entrepreneur Development Minister.

He said Najib had been long in the government and had made much valuable contributions to the country's development.

Nazri said the statement from his division was to convey the wishes of the grassroots on their support for Najib to be the Number Two man in the party and government.

He said his division might be the first to openly voice its stand.

"This will make it easier for the Umno leadership to make a decision as they will know the grassroots' stand for the posts.

"It's also to make it easier for the incoming Prime Minister to decide on the person qualified for the post (deputy prime minister)," he said.

Najib, when approached by reporters later, declined to comment on Nazri's statement.

-- BERNAMA

KAY RON TS