

21/04/2003

Khair: Umno heads must back Abdullah

PENANG, Sun. - Umno leaders must have confidence in party deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's ability to take over the reins of the party and the Government from Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who will step down in October.

In advocating support for Abdullah, Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo said Dr Mahathir himself must have had the utmost confidence in Abdullah to have anointed him as his successor.

"Surely the Prime Minister would have chosen only a good leader with calibre to take over the reins of the party and the country. In any case, leaders come and go. What is important is that whatever happens, Umno stays on as the main pillar of Malaysian politics."

Khair urged the people to remember that Dr Mahathir had served the party and the country for a long time.

"However much we love him, when the time comes, we have to accept the reality that he wants to retire and respect his wish."

Khair was commenting on a resolution passed by the Pendang Umno division yesterday, calling for the party to retain Dr Mahathir as president after he steps down as Prime Minister in October.

"Dr Mahathir has made the decision himself, and we should respect it," he said after opening the delegates' conference of Umno Tanjong division at a hotel here this afternoon.