

03/11/2003

Najib: Smooth transition reflects leaders' maturity

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Pekan, Sun. - The smooth transition of power from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi reflects the political maturity of the nation's leaders, which in turn yields a positive image for the country, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Razak said.

The historic event on Friday, he said, sent a clear signal to local and foreign observers of a leadership change that was well managed.

"I saw the changing of guard on Friday and it was a unique process not because it went on well, but because the management style of the changes gave a positive image to the country," he said after breaking fast with residents at Masjid Al-Fatah, Felcra Sri Makmur, here, last night.

Najib, who is Defence Minister and Pekan MP, described the ceremony at Istana Negara as the culmination of 16 months of careful preparation.

"The event was a culmination of careful preparations which started when Dr Mahathir made his intention of stepping down known.

"It was reflected during the ceremony where everything went well."

Asked whether the transition of power would cause problems from an Umno perspective, Najib said it would not as all supreme council members had promised to support Abdullah as Prime Minister.

"We have not detected any element within or outside the party that would want to weaken or overthrow its leadership.

"This is also a good sign that Umno will be strong for the next general election."

Najib said everyone would heed Dr Mahathir's advice to look after the party as well as they could.

"He (Dr Mahathir) told us that just because an individual succeeds, it does not guarantee that the party succeeds. So we have to work as a team."

On Pas' and Keadilan's Youth chiefs Salehudin Ayub and Ezam Mohd Nor lodging police reports against Dr Mahathir, Najib said they were free to do so but it did not mean that Dr Mahathir had done anything wrong.

Later, after performing sembahyang hajat, Najib told about 200 residents that the change of leadership was peaceful and orderly which did not happen in certain developing countries.

"We have to be grateful that the government leaders here have shown political maturity and that we can run this country well," he said.