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PM's succession plan well received

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■ By V. Vasudevan and
Ridzwan Abdullah
news@nst.com.my

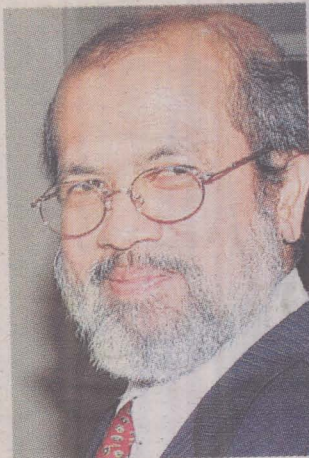
KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's succession plan has been greeted as a positive step towards calming nerves frayed by political developments since the general election.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Prof Kamaruddin M. Said said the plan would reduce politicking and pave the way for greater stability.

"This will help to put the nation's priorities back on track," said Kamaruddin, who lectures at the faculty of social science and humanities.

He said in a cooler political climate, the move to handpick a successor would have resulted in much debate.

"However, considering the current political scenario, the announcement is seen to have been made under extraordinary circumstances."



Prof Kamaruddin M. Said says the plan will pave the way for greater stability

Abdullah's announcement on Thursday that he would make way for Datuk Seri Najib Razak in June 2010 would assuage the rakyat's discomfort over current political and economic uncertainties, he said.

"What the country needs

now is stability in every aspect, especially where the economy is concerned."

Besides giving him time to fulfil all pledges made under his leadership, Abdullah said a definite timeline would ensure a smooth transition of power.

It would also stabilise both Umno and BN, which have been subjected to heavy internal politicking and infighting.

Political analyst Wong Chin Huat said, while Abdullah's decision was timely, it came with a challenge as the prime minister would have less than two years to complete his reform agenda.

Wong said Abdullah would also have to focus on uniting a party that seems to have split into factions as a result of the BN's setbacks in the last general election.

"He will now have the time to settle all these problems before he retires, but prove his worth he must. Otherwise, he will only be handing over a

weak and dispirited party to his successor. That could spell the end of BN."

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu welcomed Abdullah's announcement, describing it as a magnanimous decision.

"The prime minister has served the country well and I am confident that in the remaining two years he will complete the task entrusted to him by the people."

Samy Vellu said Abdullah must continue to be given support and trust to complete his task, adding that the MIC would back him and Najib all the way.

Gerakan secretary-general Datuk Chia Kwang Chye said the Umno tradition of a planned succession had worked well for BN and the country as a whole.

"The prime minister will not be a lame duck and will continue to enjoy the support of Gerakan and other component parties."