

Umno MPs back PM

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DATUK ABDUL GHAPUR
SALLEH

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Party reps rally behind Pak Lah a day after Dr M's resignation

KUALA LUMPUR: Umno MPs have rallied behind Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and rejected calls for them to quit in protest against his leadership.

They instead pledged their loyalty to Abdullah and their support for his leadership as party president and prime minister.

Contrary to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call for them to also quit the party, the MPs closed ranks. They also revived the Umno Parliamentary Group, to be headed by Sabah's Datuk Anifah Aman, the Kuching MP.

The MPs made the decision after a 45-minute closed-door meeting at Parliament House yesterday.

"If one resigns, how to save the party? We (Sabah MPs) were vocal last week, but our loyalty stays," declared Kalabakan MP Datuk Abdul Ghapur Salleh.

Dr Mahathir's son Datuk Mukhriz, who is Jerlun MP, announced he was not quitting Umno but vowed to stay on and fight from within.

Other leaders had these to say:

> Rafidah: Dr M is being disloyal to party.

> Muhyiddin: Quitting doesn't solve anything.

> Mat Taib: It is unprecedented for Dr M to demand for Pak Lah to quit.

> Ali Rustam: Opposition will gain from this move.



Show of support: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi shaking hands with community leaders from Sarawak at the Parliament lobby yesterday. With him is Dewan Rakyat Deputy Speaker Datuk Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar (left). The Umno MPs also met Abdullah to pledge their loyalty to him and the party.
— NORAFIFI EHSAN / The Star

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