

THE STAR

DATE: 04/04/2008

Dr M: Vote Abdullah out in upcoming Umno polls

KUALA LUMPUR: Umno members should vote Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi out in the upcoming party elections if they are concerned about the situation in the party and country, said former party president Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said party members should "find a better leader" who was conscious and concerned of the people's feelings.

The Opposition won many votes in the general election because Umno members voiced their unhappiness against the leadership and made a massive vote switch, he said after launching the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards 2008 organised by the Melawati Rotary Club yesterday.

To a question that an extraordinary general meeting was unlikely to be held to abolish the nomination quota for members to contest Umno's top posts, and that Abdullah had reiterated that he would not step down as Prime

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Minister, Dr Mahathir said: "The only way for members, if they really feel strongly about it, is to ensure that Pak Lah gets defeated in the election. Unfortunately, this will result in Umno also being defeated."

"They say we will split the party if there is a contest. Which is better - to split the party with the possibility of the party coming back, as in the case of Tengku Razaleigh (Hamzah who challenged him in 1987) or lose the (general) election completely and people regard Umno as irrelevant?" he said.

He said that if Abdullah was not going to step down, he should give the people the "chance to make their choice" and convene an Umno EGM.

Dr Mahathir said the supreme council members' duties were to abide by the people's views but if they just wanted to support Abdullah they would not be Umno's supreme council but "Pak Lah's supreme council".