

**Solemn tribute:**  
Dr Mahathir,  
former inspector-  
general of police  
Tan Sri Musa  
Hassan (left) and  
Dr Mahathir's son  
Datuk Seri  
Mukhriz Mahathir  
(centre) paying  
their last respects  
to Abdullah at  
Masjid Negara.  
- Bernama



## Dr M: Pak Lah always put nation first

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was a big-hearted leader who consistently placed the nation's interests above all else, says former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Dr Mahathir, who was instrumental in both Abdullah's rise to office as the fifth prime minister and his downfall in 2008 - had known Abdullah since 1968.

Abdullah took over as prime minister in 2003 after Dr Mahathir

stepped down and later achieved a historic victory in the 11th General Election.

"He led Barisan Nasional to its most resounding victory in the nation's history, winning nearly 90% of the vote," Dr Mahathir told Bernama.

"When the 2008 general election results were not favourable, he gracefully handed over the leadership to Datuk Seri Najib Razak, his deputy.

"This is the tradition we uphold in Malaysia. When it's time to retire, we step aside respectfully. Tun Abdullah set a noble example in this regard," he said.

He also described Abdullah as an enduring symbol of wise and dignified leadership.