

PM: Let party delegates make the call

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KUALA LUMPUR: Khairy Jamaluddin will have to step down if the Umno party delegates who put him in power reject him, the Prime Minister said yesterday.

"If the people don't want him, then why wait?" asked Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, noting that this was the guiding principle for all elected representatives.

"If the grassroots that elected them do not want them any more, they would have to step down. Whoever he is, the principle is the same," he said after opening the Community Sports League at Padang Semarang in Angkasapuri here yesterday.

He was commenting on Khairy's statement that he was prepared to quit his No 2 post in the youth wing if he was considered a liability to the party.

Khairy, Abdullah's son-in-law, has been the subject of various allegations, with accusations ranging from him allegedly being the power behind his father-in-law to having taken a second wife.

He is also alleged to have interfered in the Government's administration and become a millionaire overnight.

Khairy defended himself against the allegations while opening the Wangsa Maju and Cheras Umno youth divisional meetings on Friday.

He also responded to seven allegations levelled against him, among them being that he had been ringing Menteri Besar to issue instructions, and had interfered in administrative matters.

Meanwhile, Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob said Khairy had a right to respond to the allegations against him.

Speaking after opening the Wangsa Maju annual delegates meeting, Adnan said Khairy had to air his views as 99 per cent of the reports published about him was untrue.

"Khairy chose an open forum to answer the allegations and that was his right. I have my own views and I will present them to Khairy.

"Maybe the approach has to be modified. For instance, people say I have a fierce face, so I have to smile more. That sort of modification."

Asked if Khairy's post as Umno youth deputy chief was due to the fact that he was the Prime Minister's son-in-law, Adnan said Khairy was the choice of the delegates.

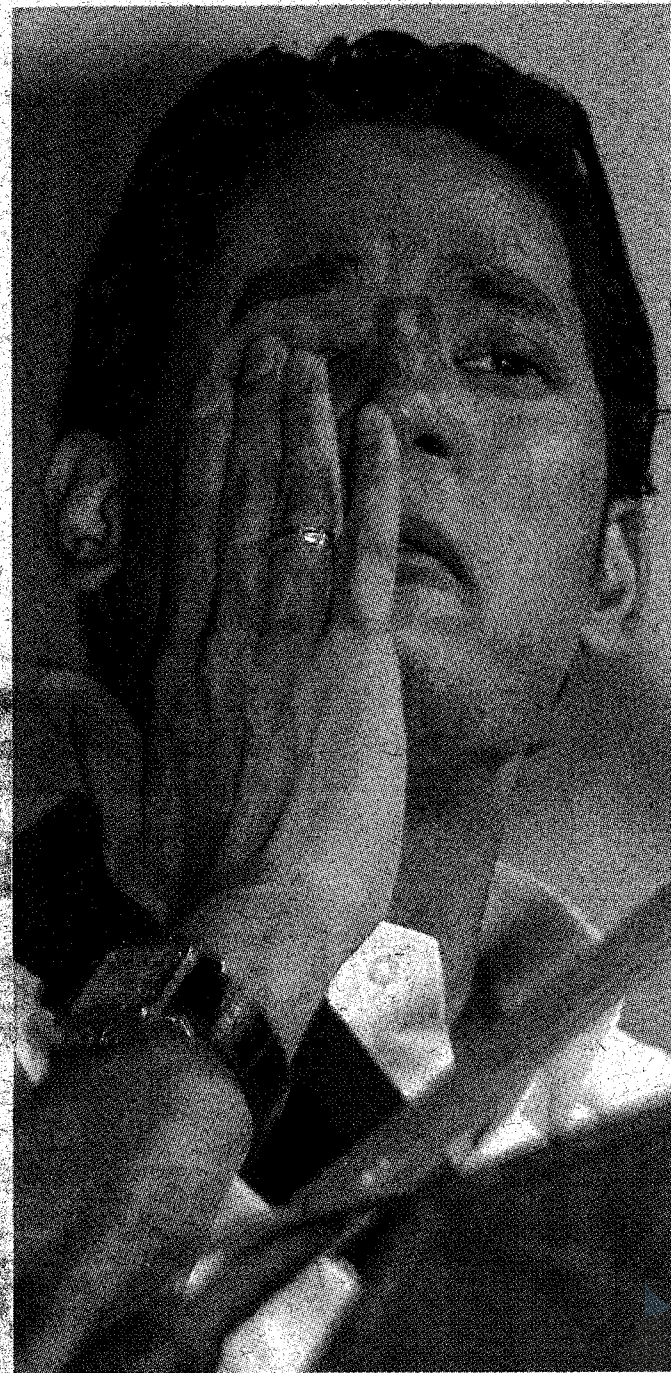
On speculation that Khairy would go for the movement's No 1 post if Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein (the incumbent) decided to try for a Umno vice-presidency, Adnan said:

"Who does not aspire to get a higher post within the party? But the final say will still remain with the members."

On the delay in Khairy's response to the allegations, Adnan said whether the answers were early or late did not matter.

"The Prime Minister himself chose not to answer Tun Dr Mahathir's allegations.

"Some people feel it is a waste of time to answer baseless allegations. It depends on the individual."



Khairy wiping away tears as he answers the allegations made against him during the opening of the Umno Youth delegates conference in Port Klang.