

Umno backs PM

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There are no factions in party, says Najib

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Umno supreme council has declared its full support for its president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

It also dispelled any notion that the party had split into factions following former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's outburst and criticism of the Government.

The supreme council, which comprises all Umno leaders, decided this at a meeting that

lasted about three hours yesterday.

Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak told reporters at a press conference after the meeting: "Umno wishes to stress that this is the stand of all the leaders - at the

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national and state levels. There are no leaders who do not support the Prime Minister's leadership.

"With this, we need to stress that there are no factions in Umno."

Tun Mahathir's strong criticisms - made through the media, on the issuance of Approved Permits for car imports, the non-renewal of Tengku Tan Sri Mahaleel Tengku Ariff's contract as Proton chief executive, the scrapping of the Johor half-bridge project, and the sale of motorcycle maker MV Agusta SpA for one euro - was discussed at the meeting.

Najib said the supreme council also agreed that the Government had the right to make decisions and policies based on the current situation and development.

"The council is also of the view that all decisions taken were in the people's interests."

Najib said Umno would provide explanations "objectively, backed by facts and in a good and respectable manner" to any criticism of government decisions by Dr Mahathir or any

