

Musa's resignation won't affect Umno unity, says PM

IPOH, Sat. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Datuk Musa Hitam's resignation from his Cabinet posts would have no effect on Umno unity.

He told a Press conference at the airport here before leaving for Trolak that the question of party disunity did not arise because "party unity had not been questioned at all."

"All the telegrams I received and all the statements that have been made stressed that there will be party unity, support for the Supreme Council and the president," he said.

Dr Mahathir added that even Johore Umno had not withdrawn its support for

him as party president.

Datuk Musa is from Johore.

On the withdrawal of Datuk Musa's resignation as Umno deputy president, Dr Mahathir said the Supreme Council would discuss the matter.

He said Datuk Musa informed him of the withdrawal of his resignation in a letter delivered to him by the four Mentris Besar who met him in London early this week.

The delegation, comprising Datuk Amar Wan Mokhtar Ahmad (Terengganu), Datuk Abdul Ajib Ahmad (Johore), Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak (Pahang) and Datuk Seri Ramli Ngah Talib (Perak) was sent by the

Supreme Council to persuade Datuk Musa to withdraw his resignations.

However, Datuk Musa only agreed to withdraw his resignation as Umno deputy president in the interests of "party unity and stability."

Asked why he preferred the Supreme Council to decide on the issue, Dr Mahathir said: "I did not make any decision except as a collective member of the Supreme Council."

"It is not a question of preference. It is the right of the Supreme Council. It's their decision. We don't make individual decisions. We make collective decisions."

Dr Mahathir declined to say whether he had anyone

in mind to fill Datuk Musa's Cabinet posts.

"That's a \$64,000 question," he said.

He said although it had been a custom in Umno that a deputy party president was made the Deputy Prime Minister, it was not a rule.

He said if Datuk Musa did not want to become the Deputy Prime Minister, it would not pose a problem.

On his official visit to Perak, the Prime Minister said he was very happy with it, especially with the large turnout of people.

The overwhelming support for the Government proved that all the attempts to smear it had not influenced the people at all, he added.