

Dr M: Umno will not be hasty

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Umno will carry out its struggle in Sabah at its own pace and not hastily as its long-term goal is to secure only genuine support from the people there, party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"We have a long-term programme for the people and will inform them of the objectives of the party and why it had to move into Sabah.

"The people of Usukan voted for Umno in the recent by-election in the State because they understood the concept and objectives of Umno.

"We will be explaining our concept to the people in the other constituencies in the State," he told a Press conference after chairing an Umno supreme council meeting at the party headquarters.

When asked whether he would be appointing a leader from Sabah Umno to sit

on the supreme council, Dr Mahathir said: "We have no immediate plans but if the party constitution allows it, we will consider the matter at the appropriate time."

Dr Mahathir also announced that the membership of Umno had soared to more than 1.56 million, clearly showing that the majority of members who had left the party to join other parties had returned to Umno's fold.

He said no other political party could claim it had the membership of the majority of those who left the party when it was declared defunct by the court.

The Prime Minister said that of late there have been defections from Semangat 46 and even Pas by former Umno members.

He said the national Youth chief of Hamim, Encik Madla Yob, had joined Umno this month.

He said 72 Youth leaders from branches in Pasir Mas

had resigned from Semangat 46 to join Umno.

Dr Mahathir also announced the appointments of deputy State liaison chiefs for the party in several States.

They are Encik Azmi Khalid (Perlis), Youth and Sports Minister Haji Annuar Musa (Kelantan), Public Enterprises Minister Datuk Dr Yusof Nor (Terengganu), Deputy Chief Minister Dr Ibrahim Saad (Penang), Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Abu Hassan Omar (Selangor), Datuk Khalid Yunus (Negri Sembilan), Datuk Nasir Manaf (Malacca) and Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat (Johor).

"The deputy chief for Federal Territory will be appointed when Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba returns from leave."

Encik Ghafar is the head of the Federal Territory Umno liaison committee.