

03/05/1997

Selangor Umno backs appointment of Abu Hassan

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The Selangor Umno liaison committee expressed its support for the appointment of Datuk Abu Hassan Omar as Selangor Menteri Besar at an hour-long meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim this afternoon.

The meeting, at the Prime Minister's Department, was arranged by Anwar to explain the Prime Minister's decision and why Abu Hassan was selected.

All the members, except for Abu Hassan, who is the committee's deputy chairman, were present.

Several of them wanted to know how the decision was reached as it would involve two by-elections.

"This is unusual but we accept the Deputy Prime Minister's explanation," said Paya Jaras Assemblyman Datuk Saidin Thamby.

Datuk Onn Ismail, the liaison committee's secretary and the State Assembly Speaker, said they accepted Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's decision because they had given him the mandate to decide on the new Menteri Besar.

Onn said the committee would meet tonight to discuss, among other things, the appointment of an acting Menteri Besar for the time being.

To enable Abu Hassan to hold the post, he will contest the Permatang State seat held by Jamaluddin Adnan, who in turn will contest the Kuala Selangor parliamentary seat vacated by Abu Hassan.

Both vacated their seats today.

Exco member Datuk Dr Zainal Abidin Ahmad said Abu Hassan was an apt choice because of his vast experience in politics.

He said no one should question the decision as Abu Hassan had all the qualities and capabilities to lead Selangor towards achieving a fully industrialised State status by the year 2005.

Another Exco member Datuk Abdul Fatah Iskandar said he fully supported Abu Hassan as the next Menteri Besar.

State Umno Youth chief Soohaimi Abdul Rahman said the Prime Minister's decision was not totally unexpected as Abu Hassan was one of the most senior leaders in Selangor.

"The State Umno Youth will fully support him as the next Menteri Besar and will extend its full co-operation," he said.

Selangor Wanita Umno chief Datin Paduka Rakibah Abdul Manap said she was not surprised by the announcement as she had already expected that the candidate would be an experienced leader.

State Assemblywoman for Jeram, Mesrah Selamat, said the Prime Minister's decision was very wise as Abu Hassan commanded respect and support from the State level.

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