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Selangor Umno backs PM (HL)

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SHAH ALAM, Sat. - The Selangor Umno Liaison Committee, the party's highest policy-making body in the State, today pledged support for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in his task of selecting a new Selangor Menteri Besar.

The committee's backing came after a 90-minute meeting with the Prime Minister, who is also Umno president, at the Prime Minister's Department this morning.

The committee was led by its deputy chief Datuk Abu Hassan Omar, who is also Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs.

On Monday, Dr Mahathir received a similar pledge from members of the State Executive Council.

Speaking to reporters after launching the Malaysian-made TVR Chimaera sports car at the Shah Alam Racing Circuit, the Prime Minister described the meeting as "ordinary", adding that he used the occasion to explain the status of former Menteri Besar, Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib.

He said he had received the pledge of support and co-operation from all those who attended the meeting regarding the appointment of Muhammad's successor.

"His Royal Highness the Sultan, Executive Councillors, the Umno State Liaison Committee and Muhammad have entrusted me with the task," he said when asked on the appointment of the new Menteri Besar.

Asked when he would announce the name of the new Menteri Besar, Dr Mahathir replied: "It all depends on how much time I need to study (the candidates)."

Muhammad's resignation was announced by Dr Mahathir after he chaired the Umno supreme council meeting on April 12.

The Menteri Besar since 1986, Muhammad's resignation is effective April 14. He also vacated his positions as Selangor and Federal Territory Umno liaison committee chairman and Selangor and Federal Territory Barisan Nasional chairman but retained his post as one of the three Umno vice-presidents and his Batang Kali State seat.

Speaking to the Press after calling on the Sultan of Selangor on Monday, the Prime Minister said he needed more time to decide on the appointment.

Abu Hassan, speaking to the Press after chairing the first National Consumer Affairs Council meeting at the ministry in Menara Maybank, said the committee expressed its support for the Prime Minister in choosing a "suitable candidate" to fill the post.

He added that the committee would accept whoever Dr Mahathir selected.

Meanwhile, when opening the Pinggiran Bukit Rahman Putra Umno branch in Sungai Buloh, Assemblyman for Paya Jaras, Datuk Saidin Thamby, who was present at the meeting with the Prime Minister, said the party president emphasised the importance of maintaining a clean administration.

"Dr Mahathir said all leaders should not only be clean but should also be seen to be clean," he said.

"As leaders, they must be willing to make sacrifices for the party and should not think of personal gain."

"The ultimate reward for their sacrifices is victory with large margins at the polls," he said.

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