

I respect PM's decision,²⁵ says Penang Deputy CM^{S 3. 7 98}

PENANG: Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Mohd Shariff Omar said he respected the Prime Minister's decision to re-tire Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim of his posts and urged the people to support Dr Mahathir.

"Umno members in Penang must stay calm, be united and give their support to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as Prime Minister and Umno president," he told reporters at Penang International Airport last night upon his return from an "emergency trip" to Kuala Lumpur.

Mohd Shariff, who arrived on the 9.45pm flight, was accompanied by Balik Pulau Umno division chairman Datuk Dr Hilmi Yahya and Kepala Batas Umno division deputy chairman

Datuk Yahaya Abdul Hamid.

Earlier, Mohd Shariff had taken the 3.30pm flight to Kuala Lumpur after being summoned to attend an Umno liaison committee meeting at Anwar's residence in Bukit Damansara.

The meeting, he said, was scheduled to have started after the *maghrib* prayers (at about 7.30pm) last night.

"But when I reached Kuala Lumpur International Airport, I got to know there would be no meeting. So I decided to take the flight back," he said.

Mohd Shariff said he had a chat with Anwar in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday night during which Anwar "gave a non-specific explanation about current problems" to him and other Penang Umno members who were present.

Mohd Shariff, who is also state Umno liaison committee deputy chairman, said he did not foresee any break-up within party circles here, adding that "there is no reason for chaos."

On the next course of action by the committee he said "it is the prerogative of the Prime Minister to determine that."