

07/11/1998

Abdullah heads Penang Umno liaison committee

Ashraf Abdullah; Marhalim Abas

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has been appointed Penang liaison committee chief, replacing Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced this tonight after a three-hour Umno supreme council meeting at the party headquarters.

The position fell vacant following Anwar's expulsion from the party on Sept 3, a day after he was sacked as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister.

Abdullah, the Kepala Batas Umno division chief, was elected vice-president in the 1996 party elections, three years after his surprise defeat in the race for one of three vice-president's posts.

Abdullah, 59, who is Foreign Minister, also chairs the Umno management and disciplinary committee together with vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Dr Mahathir also said the 25 members who had replied to their show-cause letters, including former Umno Youth chief Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, would be interviewed by the committee before a decision could be taken on their fates.

"This is not because the council is dissatisfied with their replies. Some of them have pledged loyalty to the party and the leadership. All these have to be taken into consideration."

Dr Mahathir said the activities of the 25 would be monitored by the party until a decision was taken on their fates.

He expressed the hope that all those who had replied to the show-cause letters could be interviewed by the committee before next month's council meeting.

Dr Mahathir also said Umno would take necessary measures to counter lies spread by "certain quarters" on Umno and its leaders.

"The foreign media is already anti-Umno. I hope the local Press could help by writing more balanced reports."

(END)