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Najib to chair meeting in absence of Abdullah

SHAH ALAM, Mon. - Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak will chair the party's management and disciplinary committee on Wednesday in the absence of joint-chairman Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Abdullah is in the United States and will return only on Oct 4.

"It depends on who is available. If I am the only one available, then I have to chair the meeting," Najib said.

He said this when asked whether he would be chairing the meeting alone.

He had earlier opened the first meeting of the Congregation of National Language and Cultural Activists Malaysia.

Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said that the two vice-presidents would head the committee since the removal of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim from the party.

The meeting was to discuss the fate of Umno members found to have backed Anwar in his so-called reformation movement.

Others in the committee are Wanita Umno head Datuk Siti Zaharah Sulaiman, Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik and information chief Datuk Dr Yusof Noor.

On whether there was a need for an extraordinary meeting to enable members to express their grouses, as suggested by permanent chairman Tan Sri Ninam Shah, Najib said it had yet to receive any suggestion except from Sulaiman.

However, Najib said members who were dissatisfied over Anwar's dismissal and removal from the Cabinet and party post could express their grouses to the party leadership.

"Members can channel their grouses through the state divisions or directly to the State liaison committee," he said.

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