

Dr M: Special
panel
to probe
Fauzi's claims

By MERGAWATI
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KUALA LUMPUR: A special Umno ad hoc committee will be set up to investigate allegations of wrongdoings in the Pahang Government and money politics in Umno by Beserah state assemblyman Datuk Fauzi Abdul Rahman.

Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the supreme council, which met yesterday, felt that the committee should conduct the investigation immediately.

The committee would be under the disciplinary board, chaired by Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen, and its members would be neutral, Dr Mahathir said after a 3 1/2-hour meeting here.

Asked why special attention was given to Fauzi's allegations when the party's disciplinary board received many complaints of money politics, Dr Mahathir said:

"What Fauzi wants to do is something which can do damage to the party. That is why we are giving attention to his allegations."

Fauzi had tendered a letter to Pahang Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob on

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Friday revealing his intention to resign from Umno.

He had done so, he said, because of his unhappiness with money politics in the party, even at branch level.

Fauzi also lodged a police report against Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob over allegations relating to state funds during Khalil's tenure as mentri besar until 1999.

Dr Mahathir added that the council agreed that the Kuantan Umno division's annual meeting be postponed until investigations were completed.

"The investigations will be done soon and I hope everybody will give their co-operation by providing clear proof so that action can be taken

against those involved in money politics and other allegations by Fauzi.

"I want to remind those who make allegations of money politics that if we find their accusations have no basis, action will be taken against them.

"If any allegation is being made, it must have basis because this move will only bring disrepute to the party," he added.

Asked whether the investigation would affect Khalil's position as Umno secretary-general, Dr Mahathir replied: "No. A person is not guilty until proven guilty."

Asked on Fauzi's position, Dr Mahathir said Fauzi did not state his actual intention.

"His letter is not very clear. He said he did not want to leave Umno,

so we don't know what he wants exactly.

"A state assemblyman who wants to vacate should address his resignation to the Speaker of the assembly.

"It is up to him. For Umno, we do not want him to resign but we have no way to force him to stay," Dr Mahathir said.

Fauzi, when contacted, said he was happy with the decision and thanked Dr Mahathir and the council, adding that he would give full co-operation in the investigation.

Khalil said the decision was good and its members would be independent.

Dr Mahathir also announced the appointment of supreme council member Azalina Othman as head of Puteri Umno.

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