

Abdul Hamid quits as Minister in PM's Dept

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman has tendered his resignation as Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, fuelling speculation that he will play a more pivotal role at the state-level leadership.

Abdul Hamid, who is the Umno division head in Sik, Kedah, said his resignation letter was submitted to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad before the Prime Minister left

for Myanmar on Wednesday for a working visit.

Speaking at a news conference at his office in Putrajaya, Abdul Hamid said this was to enable the Prime Minister to appoint a new person to oversee the implementation and administration of Islam and its propagation, with focus on the *Fardhu-Ain* (religious mandatory practices).

He said from now on he would focus on *Fardhu-Ki-*

fayah (religious obligatory) work.

Abdul Hamid joined the Cabinet after he was made a senator following his defeat in the November 1999 general election.

He failed to retain his Sik parliamentary seat, which was won by Prof Datuk Shahnnon Ahmad of PAS.

At the Sik Umno division meeting on Thursday, he had indicated that he was among

the ministers involved in the Cabinet reshuffle, expected to be announced after Dr Mahathir returns from Myanmar on Tuesday.

"I made this decision (to resign) willingly after discussing it with the leadership and after much thinking about the country's political situation, particularly among Muslims," Abdul Hamid said.

His decision came in the wake of continued conflicts in

Kedah Umno, aggravated by the silence of Kedah Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain on the post he will contest for at the coming divisional elections for Kuala Kedah.