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Supreme council names Najib as Pahang Umno deputy chief

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has been appointed Pahang Umno deputy chief by the party's supreme council today.

Najib takes over the position from Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob, who is also Information Minister. Pahang Umno is currently headed by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob.

Meanwhile, Sabah Umno treasurer Datuk Musa Aman has been appointed State Umno liaison committee chairman, taking over from Datuk Osu Sukam.

The appointments were announced by Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad after chairing the party's supreme council meeting at Umno headquarters here.

Explaining the decision to appoint Najib, Dr Mahathir said:

"We want Tan Sri Khalil to concentrate fully on his duties at his Ministry, which we feel is very important.

"We also want him to focus on his duties as Umno secretary-general, because we will increase Umno activities, and he is required to pay attention to these duties and not so much on Pahang."

Adding in jest, Dr Mahathir said that "it is okay for Khalil to concentrate on Pahang, but not solely on the State, give those (responsibilities) to Najib."

"This also does not mean that the Minister of Defence is not important," Dr Mahathir quipped to the laughter of those present.

Dr Mahathir said the council also discussed the Barisan Nasional's victory in Sarawak elections.

"We feel happy with our sterling victory in Sarawak and we would like to congratulate the chairman of Sarawak BN (Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud)," said Dr Mahathir, adding that Umno will send a congratulatory letter to Abdul Taib.

Dr Mahathir said Umno felt "satisfied" that Pas and Keadilan were totally rejected by Sarawakians following a similiar failure by both opposition parties in Sabah.

Dr Mahathir said dirty political tactics have been rejected by the people of Sarawak. This, he added, was a good sign for democracy and the future of the BN.

On another development, Dr Mahathir said he had requested supreme council members to convey to members of parliament and State assemblymen that they must help identify suitable projects which can be funded by economic stimulus package of RM4.3 billion which he announced on Tuesday.

"This is so that these projects can be implemented immediately," he said.

Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who was also present, was asked on the party's disciplinary board, which had earlier in the day meted out one-term suspensions to four Umno officials, after finding them guilty of misconduct during the April and May divisional elections.

Abdullah was asked on the discrepancies between the terms of suspensions. Previous censures meted out by the board included suspensions of up to six years.

Abdullah said each decision stood, and those suspended must serve out their punishment regardless of the term differences.

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