

23 MAY 2001

Abdullah-Zainol

ZAINOL UNDERSTANDS UMNO'S ACTION, SAYS ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, May 23 (Bernama) -- Datuk Zainol Md Isa's decision to quit as the state executive councillor of Kedah showed he understood the Umno leadership's efforts to cleanse the party from money politics, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

"I think it is a wise decision which showed that he understood what we are doing in Umno now," he told reporters.

Abdullah, who is also Umno deputy president, said this after chairing the party's management and disciplinary committee meeting at Umno headquarters.

He said he was happy that Zainol, who is the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee chairman, that he would still remain as an Umno member and would continue to contribute to the party and the people.

Zainol announced in Alor Setar today that he will resign as Kedah state executive councillor following the Umno supreme council's endorsement of the disciplinary board's finding that he was guilty of practising money politics in the Baling divisional election last month.

Following the decision, Zainol was stripped of his position as Baling divisional chief, the post he won by a 107-vote majority when he defeated incumbent Raja Datuk Ariffin Raja Sulaiman.

Zainol is also barred from contesting, being elected or appointed to any post in the party for six years.

Zainol told a media conference in Alor Setar today that as an Umno member, he would abide by the party's decision.

Abdullah said Zainol informed him that he would not appeal against the Disciplinary Board's decision.

Umno Vice-President Tan Sri Muhammad Muhamad Taib was saddened by Zainol's decision but said it was a wise move to calm the situation.

Zainol, 52, who is in his fifth term as an assemblyman, was appointed as an executive councillor in 1998 and was the most senior state executive councillor in the state government.

He also served as the Speaker of the State Legislative Assembly in 1995.

Another Vice-President Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said those found guilty could still appeal to the Disciplinary Board although the supreme council had endorsed the board's decision.

He said the council had given its mandate to the board and whatever decision taken by the board would be supported by the council, the party's highest decision-making body.

The Umno supreme council meeting chaired by Prime Minister and party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Monday endorsed the decision by the Disciplinary Board to suspend six divisional leaders, including Zainol, for practising money politics.

The other five were Gopeng division chief Mustafa Kamal Mohd Nawawi, the division's information chief Mohd Annuar Baharuddin, Bagan Serai division deputy head Zaki Din, Selayang division information chief Rahmat Abdullah and Muar division chief, KFC Holdings deputy executive chairman Datuk Abdullah Omar.

-- BERNAMA

MHI AHH MAI TS