

# Mahathir still head of government

SUN. 25 JUN 2002

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The question of whether Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will continue to be the leader of the government in the Dewan Rakyat does not arise at all.

Speaker Tun Zahir Mohamed Ismail said: "Whether his resignation can be accepted is not the question.

"The matter has already been explained by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi,

that Mahathir has revoked his decision.

"Thus, in my opinion, it is a valid revocation, which can be accepted."

On the appointment of a new opposition leader in the Dewan Rakyat, Zahir said the new leader will be appointed based on feedback from existing opposition members.

"Usually, it is made at the discretion of the house speaker," he said.

The appointment of a new leader follows the death of PAS president Datuk Fadzil Mohd Noor, who was the MP for Pendang.

Zahir said it was unlikely that the new leader would be appointed in the current sitting, which ends on Thursday.

"The new leader will most probably be announced at the next session," he said.

The opposition leader is usually appointed from the

opposition party which has the highest number of MPs.

There are 41 opposition MPs in the Dewan Rakyat, with PAS having the largest number at 26, DAP 10, and Parti Keadilan Nasional five.

On the Pendang seat, Zahir said he is awaiting Fadzil's death certificate to enable him to notify the Election Commission of the vacant seat.