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Abdullah to chair Umno, BN councils (HL)

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Barisan Nasional supreme council will meet tomorrow for a briefing by BN deputy chairman Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi concerning Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's decision to resign as Umno president and BN chairman, and his subsequent withdrawal of this decision.

Abdullah, who is Umno deputy president, will brief the council at 6pm at the Umno headquarters at Menara Dato Onn here.

BN secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat said today that all BN component party leaders had been notified of the meeting and were expected to attend.

"This is a special meeting to enable Abdullah to explain the reality of the issue to the representatives of BN component parties.

"It will also help them understand the real situation and avoid speculation and assumptions," he added.

Mohamed said it was important for BN component parties to understand what transpired during the Umno general assembly so that "we are one in facing this issue".

"I believe BN component parties are also interested to know."

BN component party leaders said they had been notified and would be attending the meeting, which will be preceded by an Umno supreme council meeting chaired by Abdullah, scheduled for 4pm at the Umno headquarters.

The Umno supreme council will be briefed by the party's management committee on what transpired at Seri Perdana before the Prime Minister left for Naples, Italy, for a holiday.

Yesterday, Abdullah led a delegation comprising the party's management committee to meet Dr Mahathir before he left.

He said Dr Mahathir did not object to the supreme council's decision when it was conveyed to him. Abdullah was accompanied by vice-presidents Datuk Seri Najib Razak, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib, secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob, Wanita chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein.

Immediately after the Umno supreme council meeting tomorrow, Abdullah will hold a Press conference to announce its decision.

Meanwhile, Umno executive secretary Tengku Datuk Adnan Tengku Mansor said that Umno's management committee meeting would be held at 2.30pm, before the supreme council meetings of Umno and the BN.

Tengku Adnan said Abdullah would also meet the Backbenchers Club later.

The Backbenchers Club today expressed its support for Dr Mahathir's withdrawal of his resignation and urged him to continue his leadership.

"The nation went through a period of uncertainty last weekend when Dr Mahathir announced that he was going to resign. We thank God that he decided to retract that announcement," it said in a statement.

Dr Mahathir made the unexpected announcement of his resignation in his winding-up speech at the end of the 56th Umno general assembly on Saturday. His withdrawal of that decision was announced by Abdullah about an hour later.

Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, who is also an Umno supreme council member, said Dr Mahathir had no choice but to abide by the delegates' decision at the Umno assembly to continue leading the party, Barisan Nasional and the country.

In Kota Kinabalu, Chief Minister Datuk Chong Kah Kiat said Sabah hoped

Dr Mahathir would stick to his decision to withdraw his resignation from political and Government posts upon his return from holiday.

Chong, who is State BN chairman, said what was important now was for the Prime Minister to have a good rest and peace of mind.

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