

# Dr M to top Umno meeting agenda

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PETALING JAYA: Topping the agenda of the Umno supreme council which meets this morning is expected to be former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent attack on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his administration.

Party insiders say the main focus will be on how to mitigate the effects of Mahathir's scathing criticism of Abdullah and prevent a party from being split.

The supreme council, which is meeting for the first time since Mahathir's outburst, is expected to rally and voice support for Abdullah as the current leader of the party and the country.

Last Friday, the Barisan Nasional Supreme Council came out in one voice to endorse pledges of support for Abdullah by its various component parties.

On June 7, Mahathir had lashed out at Abdullah, claiming his hand-picked successor had reneged on his promises to complete some projects the former premier had initiated.

Among the issues Mahathir wanted answers to were the scrapping of the half-bridge project in Johor and the sale of MV Agusta

for one euro, and the National Automotive Policy which he claimed put Proton at a disadvantage.

However, Abdullah has generally maintained what some refer to as "an elegant silence" and declined to speak ill of his predecessor.

However, he had on June 12 announced that the various ministries would reply to Mahathir's criticisms and questions raised.

On Friday, Proton issued a lengthy statement explaining the rationale for the sale of Agusta and the termination of Tan Sri Tengku Mahaleel Tengku Ariff's contract as chief executive officer.

Political pundits believe that a handful of Umno supreme council members may even go so far as to raise the possibility of taking disciplinary action against Mahathir's.

Talk of suspending or sacking Mahathir from the party gained currency after party deputy president Datuk Seri Najib Razak warned that while Umno or BN members can voice their opinions, action can be taken if they go overboard in their criticism.

However, party watchers believe the supreme council would reject such a move which may plainly be counter-productive to maintaining party unity.