

Umno not keen to have Anwar back

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — No deal has been struck with Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to allow him back into Umno, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

"He had gone against the party and against the Government's policy," Abdullah noted. "Why should he be allowed back into the party?"

Feedback from Umno leaders also made it clear they too were not keen to have him back in the fold.

The Prime Minister was commenting on a front-page report in the *New Sunday Times* that Umno would not re-admit Anwar as a member.

The newspaper, quoting sources, said Abdullah had made this point to Barisan Nasional leaders at the weekly Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, as well as Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers.

The question of whether Anwar would be allowed to rejoin Umno and whether a deal had been struck has been reported by some segments of the foreign media.

Abdullah's reply was emphatic: "I want to clarify that I have not made any deals with Anwar. I don't like this to go on and on and become an issue. That is not good as I have nothing to hide. Why should I hide?"

He was speaking to reporters after launching the National Fitness Council at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil.

Abdullah said he had dismissed talk of a deal at a session with Umno leaders and Members of Parliament last Friday, when he tabled Budget 2005.

"The MPs asked me if Anwar would be admitted back into Umno and if I had made a deal with him. I told them the same thing I told my colleagues before the Cabinet meeting on Wednesday," he

Don't let the Anwar factor overshadow Abdullah's good work and his able leadership.

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said.

Sources told the NST that the PM told the Cabinet the two judges who decided to overturn Anwar's sodomy conviction had not refuted former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's grounds for sacking Anwar for homosexual activities.

In fact, they had confirmed there was evidence that Anwar and his adopted brother, Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja, had engaged in homosexual activities.

Abdullah said today that some people were making all sorts of allegations against him and there were also poison pen letters circulating, alleging that he was "making deals to bring Anwar back into Umno".

"Why should I be planning to bring him back upon his release? Anwar has been going against us and Government policy and he is an Opposition member."

Asked if the "spinning of stories" was part of an effort to discredit him, Abdullah said: "It could be anything. I don't want to add to the speculation."

But he noted that it was obvious these people were saying that no deals should be done on behalf of Umno.