

Dr Mahathir to concentrate more on Umno affairs

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he would now concentrate more on Umno's affairs than the Government, adding that it was part of the transition process of the national leadership.

Therefore, the Prime Minister said, he might not take part in some government functions and would leave the tasks to his deputy

(Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi).

"I will personally be concentrating more on the party rather than the Government. Maybe there are government functions which I will not attend.

"On the other hand, the Deputy Prime Minister will take over. This is an effort to make easier the process of transition of the national leadership," Dr Mahathir said after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting here today.

Earlier, he said the council also discussed at length the renewal of Umno's membership to ensure that more youths joined the party.

"We need to explain to them what the party's struggles and principles are.

"If they are interested, then they can join us."

Dr Mahathir also said the supreme council discovered that some of the young people had problems in joining Umno because there were some groups at the

branch level blocking them.

"If that is the case, these people can apply (to become members) directly to the Umno headquarters which will handle these applications itself."

Asked who the culprits responsible for blocking the applications were, Dr Mahathir said it was not necessary to name them.

He said the supreme council had also decided that members of the Puteri Umno wing should be 35 years and below.

Puteri Umno was proposed to attract young women who felt that Wanita Umno was for the older generation.

"We will decide on how the movement's framework should be at a later stage."

The Umno president also said the party leadership had received reports that more-than 700,000 voters were missing from the electoral roll. "We are trying to figure out how these names went missing," he said.