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Appointments to supreme council

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Three Wanita representatives are expected to be appointed to the Umno supreme council, the party newsletter Merdeka said in its latest edition.

It also said not all ministers, deputy ministers, Menteri Besar and the one Chief Minister who lost in the party election about two weeks ago could expect to be appointed automatically.

Quoting sources, it said party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was expected to announce the 10 new appointments on June 6 at the first supreme council meeting to be held after the party election.

Dr Mahathir could also announce the appointments for the posts of State liaison chiefs, secretary general, treasurer and information chief for the next three-year term.

The newsletter said Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan Nasional chairman, might also announce the new appointments at a special BN meeting which would be convened to discuss strategies for the Teluk Kemang parliamentary by-election.

One of the Wanita leaders expected to be appointed is former chief Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman.

It added that Siti Zaharah's appointment was important to improve relations between her supporters and those of the new chief, Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz.

Moreover, the newsletter said, Rafidah, who lost in the party election in 1996, was also subsequently appointed to the supreme council by the party president.

In addition, it said Wanita deputy chief Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil and exco member Dr Norraesah Mohamad were two other names being considered by Dr Mahathir.

The newsletter said both names were proposed by Rafidah.

Dr Mahathir, it said, had also commended the Wanita wing for its contributions when winding up the debate on the last day of the Umno annual general assembly on May 13.

"Even the delegates had asked that representatives from the Wanita wing be appointed to the council during the debates," it said.

The newsletter said senior members who lost might not be appointed to the supreme council if there were already representatives from their States.

This was to give an opportunity to others to be appointed.

"The ministers and Menteri Besar must accept the fact that they may have the right to contest in the party election, but this does not mean that if they lose, they have the automatic right to be appointed to the council," it said.

When asked to comment on the report yesterday, Dr Mahathir only said: "We allow speculation."

Dr Mahathir said not all senior officials who lost would be appointed to the council due to the limited positions.

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