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Islamic credentials basis for post in supreme council

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Strong Islamic background and credentials will form the basis for consideration by Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in naming the 10 appointed supreme council members.

Their appointment to the party's highest decision-making body is to strengthen Umno and to counter Pas' tactics in using Islam to gain support, said a report in the latest Umno newsletter, Wawasan Merdeka.

At present, only two council members are said to possess such criteria. They are Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Senator Datuk Paduka Abdul Hamid Othman and former party information chief Datuk Dr Mohd Yusof Noor.

On whether the Prime Minister would face difficulty in finding the suitable candidates, the report quoted a source close to the Umno headquarters as saying:

"Their names have been identified but Dr Mahathir needs more time to study the matter. The party wants them to contribute towards strengthening Umno and to go on the offensive against Pas."

Dr Mahathir is expected to name the appointed members before the next council meeting on July 3.

As party president, he can appoint 10 council members. The council has 25 elected members.

The report also said Menteris Besar and Chief Ministers who lost in the party elections last month but are from States with the most number of divisions would be appointed.

Menteris Besar and Chief Ministers who lost in the vice-presidency race were Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman (Johor), Datuk Seri Osu Sukam (Sabah), Tan Sri Mohamad Isa Samad (Negri Sembilan) and Datuk Seri Dr Abu Hassan Omar (Selangor).

On the appointments of Menteris Besar and the Chief Minister to the council, the source said this was to enable them to discharge their responsibilities as State Umno liaison chiefs more effectively, thus further consolidating the party's strength in the States.

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