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No contest likely for Umno's two top posts at assembly

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THE Umno general assembly and elections will be held on May 10-13 and will likely see no contest for the party's top posts of president and deputy president.

Umno president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the dates were chosen in part to commemorate the party's establishment on May 11 1946.

"This year's general assembly will also be a bit different, because normally the Umno meeting ends on a Sunday. This time it will end on Saturday. The elections (of Supreme Council members) will be held on Thursday (May 11)," he said at a press conference after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Umno Secretary-General Tan Sri Khalil Yaacob then announced that the Supreme Council has agreed the posts of president and deputy president, which is currently held by Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, will not be contested.

"The state liaison officers will convey this decision (to members) at their branch and division meetings," he said.

When asked, Dr Mahathir said it is not a directive but a position adopted by the Supreme Council.

"The council asked liaison officers... to advise their divisions not to nominate other candidates to contest these two posts."

The matter was discussed generally by the council members, and there was no specific resolution tabled or passed, the Prime Minister said.

Asked whether the decision is made with a view to preserving unity in the party, Khalil said: "Yes. Of course...it was initiated by the Supreme Council members."

As for campaigning, Dr Mahathir said candidates should be judged according to proven performance and capabilities. "We ask that they do not do too much ask that they do not do too much campaigning."

Earlier, he said the Supreme Council has decided to conduct information courses for all Umno members in the run-up to the general assembly.

"We will explain about Umno and its struggles... and why they are members. The courses will also allow us to verify Umno's membership," he said.

As part of the course material, all Umno Supreme Council members and party veterans will offer insights on problems faced by Umno, by Malays, and by the country in general, Dr Mahathir added.

"We want Umno members to be more knowledgeable about Umno and become more committed to the party," he said, instead of being preoccupied with competing for positions or overly loyal to any particular individual.

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