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Call to postpone next year's Umno polls

IPOH, Fri. - Umno supreme council member Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has urged the party to postpone its elections scheduled for next year until after the general election.

He said priority should be given to the general election where Umno would have a more important task, including to wrest Kelantan and Terengganu from Pas.

The postponement of party elections, he said, could also avoid infighting in the party.

Ahmad Zahid said the party's constitution allowed the triennial election for the posts of president, deputy-president, vice-presidents, Youth and Wanita chiefs and supreme council members to be delayed up to 18 months.

Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob yesterday said that the supreme council had not decided whether to go ahead or postpone the party elections next year as the matter was not brought up by the delegates at the just concluded 56th Umno general assembly.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Zahid, who is Bagan Datoh MP, claimed that the Asian Wall Street Journal's report on Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was malicious and was written to undermine his leadership.

"The report is purely speculative and has no basis ... they have accused Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad with similar allegations before," he said after chairing Syarikat Majuperak Berhad's 25th AGM yesterday.

The ASWJ on Wednesday quoted an unnamed analyst as saying that Abdullah's new role might lead to the return of widespread favouritism in business and he might use the position to expand his political clout in the "patronage-driven" Umno party.

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