

# State party chiefs to pay tribute to Dr M

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BY JOCELINETAN

**PETALING JAYA:** In a unique departure from tradition, all the state party chiefs will take part in the prestigious debate on the motion of thanks on the presidential address at this year's Umno general assembly.

It is meant as a tribute to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, for whom this annual gathering of the Umno faithful will be his last as the Prime Minister and party president.

Under this unusual arrangement, the motion of thanks will be moved by Umno Youth leader Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein and seconded by Puteri Umno chief Azalina Othman Said. The gesture is a demonstration of the younger generation's appreciation and support for the president.

Wanita Umno leader Datuk Seri Ratidah Aziz will join the state Umno chiefs as one of the speakers.

The move was mooted at the high-level Umno management committee and endorsed by the supreme council.

The state Umno chiefs were informed at the last supreme council meeting and all readily agreed to take on the task.

The assembly will start on Thursday while the Youth, Wanita and Puteri wings will hold theirs on Wednesday.

Umno information chief Tan Sri Megat Junid Megat Ayob said Dr Mahathir had made it clear that he does not want the general assembly to turn into a "bye-bye session."

The 77-year-old leader shocked everyone when he announced his resignation at

the end of last year's assembly but he was persuaded to stay on until October.

"He doesn't want it to be organised as a farewell. He just wants a normal assembly," he said.

Dr Mahathir, according to Megat Junid, had told party leaders: "Please don't force people to remember me. If they think I have done a good job, then they can remember me as they like. I am not Saddam Hussein."

Although this year's sitting will not be a specific farewell session for Dr Mahathir, the debate on the three motions that will be tabled over the three-day sitting is expected to revolve around him as Umno leaders thank him for his contributions to the party and coun-

try.

Many of the debaters will also welcome the next Umno president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Perlis will be represented by Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim. Kedah by Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain, Perak by Datuk Seri Mohd Tajol Rosli Ghazali. Selangor by Datuk Seri Khir Toyo, the Federal Territory by Datuk Tengku Adnan Mansor, Negri Sembilan by Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad, Malacca by Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam, Johor by Datuk Chani Othman and Kelantan by Datuk Mustapha Mohamed.

Penang and Terengganu, will be represented by their respective deputy chiefs, Datuk Helmi Yahya and Datuk Idris Jusoh.