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Decision on nominations soon

By Zubaidah Abu Bakar; Ahmad Fairuz Othman

BANGI, Sun. - The Umno supreme council will meet soon to decide whether the Kepala Batas and Pekan Umno divisions have to nominate candidates for top party posts for September's party elections.

Acting Umno president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said he had discussed with Datuk Seri Najib Razak the proposal that the two divisions stay neutral and decided to leave the decision to the council.

Kepala Batas is headed by Abdullah while Najib, who is carrying out the duties of Umno deputy president, heads the Pekan division.

"The supreme council meeting will be brought forward because I am going on an overseas trip but the date has not been fixed yet," he told reporters after a dialogue with members of Kelab Penyayang here.

Kelab Penyayang looks after the welfare of disabled university students. It has been set up in eight public and two private universities in collaboration with Yayasan Budi Penyayang.

Under the party's constitution, Umno divisions holding their delegates' meetings between July 8 and 22 should make nominations for all positions being contested at national level. But there have been suggestions for the Kepala Batas and Pekan divisions to be exempt from nominating candidates.

In the past, Umno delegates gave undue weightage to nominations forwarded by the divisions headed by the Umno president and deputy president. They interpreted the choice of the two divisions as an endorsement by the top leadership, thereby putting other candidates at a disadvantage.

For example, when the Kubang Pasu division nominated three names for the vice-president positions in 2000, it was immediately taken by the grassroots as a signal that the then Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad wanted party delegates to support the trio.

Abdullah today also advised party members not to resort to extreme acts like fighting in the divisional elections.

"It is embarrassing if a fight breaks out. Because of it, the divisional meetings can be declared null and void."

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