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Umno issues dominate two Bahasa dailies

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IT was the week of the Umno general assembly, and the country's two Bahasa dailies devoted much space to news on the event at the Putra World Trade Centre.

From Tuesday till yesterday, the pages of Berita Harian and Utusan Malaysia were full with reports, comments, analyses and pictures of the four-day assembly. It was the same with their sister weekend papers, Berita Minggu and Minggu Malaysia.

The focus was understandable as it was the last assembly for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as Umno president. The Prime Minister is resigning from all party and Government posts in October.

Yesterday, Minggu Malaysia and Berita Minggu, published the picture of Dr Mahathir and his deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, acknowledging the crowd after the assembly.

One of the highlights of the assembly, concurred both newspapers, was the pledge by the party's three vice-presidents - Datuk Seri Najib Razak, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Tan Sri Muhammad Taib - not to question the person to be chosen by Abdullah as the next Deputy Prime Minister.

The undertaking, concluded political analysts, was significant as it would lead to a no-contest for the post of Umno deputy president, to be decided by delegates at the party elections next year.

Other significant news coming out from the assembly was the announcement by Abdullah on Friday that he would name his successor in November and Dr Mahathir's remarks that the post of Chief Minister of Penang would continue to be held by Gerakan, a component party of Barisan Nasional.

The issue cropped up during the debate on the presidential address when a delegate from Penang proposed that Umno should be given the right to lead the State to ensure the interests of the Malays were more protected.

Besides Umno stories, reports on the abduction and murder of market analyst Canny Ong Lay Kian continued to grip the nation.

Berita Minggu reported police had identified the person suspected to have committed the crime and his motive.

Apparently, the PWTC was not the only crowded place on Saturday. In Taman Tasik Permaisuri, Bandar Tun Razak, Berita Minggu and Minggu Malaysia reported more than 10,000 fans turned up at the wedding reception of singer/actress Erra Fazira and singer/actor/producer Yusri Abdul Halim of the KRU Group.

The couple solemnised their marriage on June 15 in Taman Tun Dr Ismail.

Berita Minggu reported several fans fainted and one was injured when the crowd jostled to get close to the celebrity couple.