

'Umno elections may be held earlier'

MalaysiaKini.com

May 21, 2013

By Rajvinder Singh, The Malay Mail

Umno's triennial party polls may be brought forward to August from October to prevent issues from festering and bogging down the party leadership, party insiders said.

The party leadership wants members and delegates to decide quickly on a new slate to take the BN lynchpin forward before the next general election, The Malaysian Insider reported yesterday, quoting party insiders.

"The party elections are now likely (to be held) in August and delegates will likely be chosen during the fasting month in July," a party source said.

The party's 191 divisions will hold meetings to indirectly vote for top office bearers together with some 2,500 delegates attending the annual general assembly.

Umno information chief Ahmad Maslan said last week that some 146,500 party delegates nationwide will elect the party leadership in line with Umno's constitutional amendments.

"Previously, only 2,500 delegates determined the party leadership, but this time it has been increased to 146,500. The election starts at the branch level," he said.

Ahmad added that Umno's election of office bearers would not be chaotic as what had happened in the elections of opposition parties.

The special Umno general assembly in 2009 approved constitutional amendments giving 146,500 delegates the right to vote for the leadership, abolishing the quota system, simultaneous delegates meeting, and allowing more women appointees.

Umno also made membership fees one-off, empowered party Youth, Wanita and Puteri wings to approve new members, and recognise the contributions of division secretaries.

Ahmad stressed that the amendments were part of the Umno transformation process to make the party more democratic, transparent and inclusive.

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Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/230804>

