

# PM TO BE UMNO'S GUEST OF HONOUR

## Presidents and key Leaders of unity govt parties also invited to Umno's assembly

QISTINA SALLEHUDDIN  
AND AQILAH ALIAS  
KUALA LUMPUR  
news@nst.com.my

**I**N a show of unity, the 2023 Umno general assembly will have as its guest of honour Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, the first time the 10th prime minister will be attending the event since his ouster from the party in 1998.

The presidents and key leaders of all the other parties in the unity government will also be invited, said Umno secretary-general Datuk Dr Asyraf Wajidi Dusuki, meaning that for the first time ever, PKR and DAP will be represented at the assembly.

The move was described by political observers as a key one in demonstrating the stability and unity of the federal government, especially in the run-up to the elections to be held in six states soon.

It was also important in the face

of efforts by the opposition to shore up support from Malay voters.

Asyraf said this year's assembly would be a bit different as all 19 unity government party presidents were expected to attend.

"At the same time, the guest of honour will be the prime minister himself, though there will be no speech from him.

"The speech on policy will be delivered by the party president, Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi," he said at the World Trade Centre here.

On whether invitations would also be extended to Umno Youth's counterparts in other parties, he said the party's respective wings would follow the directions given by the main branch.

"There are invitations and usually, they will follow the directions given by the main branch and the assembly's direction.

"Hence, they will also follow suit if Umno is also inviting the parties under the unity government."

Asyraf said 6,341 Umno delegates were expected to attend the general assembly this year.

Of the total, 2,888 delegates will attend the general assembly; 1,159 will attend the Wanita assembly; 1,160 will attend the

Youth assembly; and, 1,134 will attend the Puteri assembly.

He said among the items on the agenda to be discussed in the assembly were the people's economic wellbeing and other issues.

The assembly will kick off with a briefing session by the party president on June 7.

Political experts, meanwhile, told the *New Straits Times* that apart from demonstrating the unity and stability of the federal government, the move would also attract Malay voters in the upcoming state elections.

Nusantara Academy for Strategic Research senior fellow Dr Azmi Hassan said the invitation extended by Umno to other component parties was critical to show the stability and cohesiveness of the unity government, especially in facing Perikatan Nasional.

"This is a step in the trajectory of showing (the people) that the government is indeed stable and all parties are working together," he said.

"The move is also critical to show that they are united in facing the attacks from other parties, such as PN, which appears strong in using the Islamic factor to gain Malay support."