

**Umno likely to speed up party polls to August**  
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**By Jahabar Sadiq**

KUALA LUMPUR, May 20 — Umno is likely to bring forward its triennial party polls to August from October to prevent issues from festering and bogging down its leadership, say party insiders.

The Malaysian Insider understands that the party leadership wants members and delegates to decide quickly on a new slate to take the Barisan Nasional (BN) lynchpin forward before the next general election.

"The party elections are now likely in August and delegates to be chosen during the fasting month in July," a party source told The Malaysian Insider today.

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.

Party information chief Datuk Ahmad Maslan said last week that some 146,500 Umno 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 branch level."

Ahmad believed that the Umno election of office bearers would not become chaotic as what happened in the election 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 allow more women appointees.

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

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

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