

Address didn't touch on Musa's points

NSF 19 SEP 1986

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Many delegates at the Umno general assembly today had expected party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to reply to the points raised by his deputy, Datuk Musa Hitam, in his speech at yesterday's joint opening of the Youth and Wanita assemblies but were not disappointed that he did not.

In his 34-page speech, Dr Mahathir stressed more on national and international issues and no where could he be seen to have replied to his deputy.

Datuk Musa had spoken of the lack of democracy in the party and criticised those who chose to remain silent on issues affecting Malays and the nation.

Datuk Musa had said that there was no place for dictators in Umno.

Umno, he added, was a democratic organisation belonging to all Malays and that it would not allow rule by dictatorship or the "iron hand".

One delegate said Dr Mahathir had defended his dignity as Umno president by not replying to Datuk Musa's remarks, which he regarded as "very personal".

He said Dr Mahathir was after all, delivering a policy speech and did not have to speak on the issues raised by his deputy.

"It is only fitting that he focus his attention on more important issues, on the economy, foreign policy and the recent general election," he said.

Silence

Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid said he was not at all surprised by the contents of Datuk Musa's speech.

He said Dr Mahathir did not see any reason why he should reply (to the issues raised in Datuk Musa's speech) as there were more important issues at hand.

"Dr Mahathir's was a problem-solving speech...," he said.

Another, however, said Dr Mahathir was merely eluding the issues by not reacting to Datuk Musa's

attack.

One Umno veteran, Haji Abdul Kahar Ahmad, from Muar, debating the presidential address, asked why neither Dr Mahathir nor Datuk Musa cared to explain the reasons behind Datuk Musa's resignation from the Cabinet.

He was visibly angry over the silence on this issue and felt that the leadership owed Umno members an explanation.

A Wanita Umno delegate said the opening of the joint Wanita and Youth assemblies should not be used as a platform to hit out at one's colleagues.

However, many of Datuk Musa's supporters described his speech as "superb", "philosophical" and "the best he has ever made".

One supporter disagreed that the speech was Datuk Musa's personal attack on certain leaders in the party.

"He was merely stressing on what the party should be... what its struggle is all about... It is up to people to interpret (the speech)," he said.