

06/09/1997

Leaders: Speech an inspiring piece

UMNO Wanita Chief Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman said Umno president Dr Mahathir Mohamad's presidential speech was "so moving and inspiring" that it would motivate the movement to be proactive as required by the party.

Citing some of the things Dr Mahathir had mentioned about women, Siti Zaharah said women seemed to be the scapegoat whenever there were religious controversies.

Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid said it was clear that Dr Mahathir wanted Umno to play a leading role in promoting the Islamic culture.

"Dr Mahathir did not address problems like the stock market manipulation but more on fundamentals which are of paramount importance," he said. "The speech is a process to cleanse the minds of the Malays."

Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Shahidan Kassim said it was timely that Dr Mahathir raised the issues related to Islam as the nation could not develop as it aspired if there was no balance between physical and spiritual development.

Supreme council member Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob said the speech should encourage Umno members to take up challenges especially in religion, culture and new colonialism.

Pahang Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob said the speech provided Umno members a clear understanding on contemporary issues and how to deal with them.

"Religious scholars should accept suggestions contained in the speech with an open heart," he said.

Former Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said Dr Mahathir was right when he said that religious extremism should be curbed.

"Religious officials should not touch on petty matters but look into more important issues affecting the Malays," said Muhyiddin, who is Youth and Sports Minister.

Former Semangat 46 president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said the speech was "extremely stimulating and complete".

Former Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said the challenges as outlined in the speech would directly affect Umno's ability to defend the economy and strengthen the country.

"This is very apt as we see that Malays have the tendency to be divided by trivial issues."

Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, who described Dr Mahathir as a proponent of cultural reform, said the Umno president wanted party members to seriously think about the relationship between Umno, Malays and Islam.

(END)