

11 MAY 1997

Forum-Mahathir

PRIME MINISTER BECOMES SUBJECT OF PUN AT FORUM

KUALA LUMPUR, May 11 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today became the subject of pun at an Umno forum here which had even the Prime Minister in stitches.

Panellist Prof Madya Mahadzir Mohd Khir, from the University of Malaya, amused Dr Mahathir and the audience with his frank views and observation at the Forum on the History of Umno held in conjunction with the 51st anniversary celebration of the party at Umno headquarters at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC).

In jest he said: "Dr Mahathir has strength and weaknesses, but what I know is that he has more weaknesses than strength.

"There is only one significant weakness, that is, we find it difficult to make any speculation and normally he does not give us any chance to speculate at all."

This drew loud applause and laughter from the audience attending the forum themed "Success and Challenges" organised by Umno Youth.

Prof Mahadzir, who frequently expressed cynical remarks in lighter vein, said speculations are usually made based on convention but Dr Mahathir on the other hand is usually not conventional and this is one of his weaknesses.

As an example, he said, he speculates that Dr Mahathir will hold general election in 1999 before the party elections "but the Prime Minister will hold it (general election) in 2000."

Prof Mahadzir also drew the attention of the audience to the spelling of his name and that of his namesake, explaining that although they both have the same name, the spelling for his name (Mahadzir) is correct while the spelling for the Prime Minister's name (Mahathir) is erroneous.

With regard to the achievement of the Malays since the inception of Umno in 1946 until today, Prof Mahadzir again poked fun at Dr Mahathir by explaining that the Bahasa Malaysia word for achievement is "pencapaian" and not "kecapaian" as frequently used by the Prime Minister.

In fact when delivering his closing remarks at the forum, Dr Mahathir again mentioned the word "kecapaian" as though reminding the audience that his choice of word was more correct.

Prof Mahadzir again had the audience in stitches when he said that the Malays included "DKK, DKA, those of Javanese origin and others."

"To me Malay is a 'nation' and not race and it is because of Za'ba that Umno was born, and it is not fair for us to try and belittle the DKK and others," he said looking at the direction of Dr Mahathir, his deputy, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Umno permanent chairman, Tan Sri Haji Sulaiman Ninam Shah. -- BERNAMA

ZAB AO