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Forum-Umno

UMNO MUST MAINTAIN OPENNESS, SAYS PAK SAMAD

KUALA LUMPUR, May 11 (Bernama) -- Umno's openness, flexibility and non-rigidness must be maintained to ensure that its present position can be preserved, said veteran journalist and nationalist Tan Sri Abdul Samad Ismail.

"Umno can maintain its position until today because it is flexible, pragmatic and not rigid and can accept whatever changes proposed," he said at a forum on the History of Umno themed "Success and Challenges" at the Putra World Trade Centre, here.

The forum chaired by Utusan Group Editor-in-Chief, Johan Jaaffar, was organised by Umno Youth in conjunction with the party's 51st anniversary celebration today. Two other panellists at the forum were Prof Madya Mahadzir Mohd Khir, from the University of Malaya, and Umno veteran Tan Sri Mustapha Jabar.

He said the party which was set up on May 11 1946 to unite the Malays against the Malayan Union during the British administration must preserve its character as the "mover" for the development of the race and nation.

"This role must be preserved until today, otherwise it (the party) will be static," said Abdul Samad who is better known as "Pak Samad".

According to Pak Samad, the party's characteristics which easily accepted ideas or inspirations from any quarters for betterment and change, enabled Umno to keep abreast with the times.

"Umno can accept ideas for change. This makes Umno different from an 'old maid', on the other hand Umno is always 'youthful'", he said which was greeted by loud applause from the audience.

Another panellist, Prof Mahadzir, who talked on the cause championed by Umno members which was changing, said party members must maintain the party's idealism because if they digressed, the party would disintegrate.

Citing the change in idealism among some Umno members which led to corruption and abuse of power, he said: "Umno leaders who had the power but did not know how to use it are stupid leaders."

In the year 2020, if Umno members do not preserve the party's idealism then the party is bound to fail in its struggles, he added.

Mahadzir said party members must go back to the original idealism of the party by evaluating the history of the party's struggles because they would then understand the weaknesses and strength of the party.

The speech of party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Umno general assembly last year which among others urged members to 'love the party, race, religion and nation' showed the idealism which should be emulated by everyone, he said.

Meanwhile, Mustapha who was once Umno secretary general, recalled that the party had its present name following a suggestion by the late nationalist Za'aba.

Mustapha said Umno was initially known as U.M.O. (United Malay Organisation) or "Parti Melayu Bersatu". However, Za'aba suggested that the word 'National' (the alphabet N in Umno) be incorporated to reflect the involvement of Malays throughout the nation.

He said the Malays then were united in their fight against the formation of the Malayan Union by staging mammoth rallies in front of the Station Hotel here, the venue for the signing of the agreement between the Malay Rulers and the British government. -- BERNAMA

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