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`Honour promises made to people'

UMNO does not need a leadership crisis as it is already saddled with enough problems relating to the economy, environment, water and illegal immigrants to attend to, Sungai Siput division chief Datuk Mohd Padil Harun said yesterday.

He said Umno leaders, given the mandate by the people, must ensure continuity in the struggle to help the Malays and be responsible for their actions.

"We have enough problems with illegal immigrants, the haze, economic downturn, water, salary cuts, retrenchment and unemployment.

"I fear the nation will face a leadership crisis if the leaders fail to honour their promises. In fact, some simple promises like giving zinc roof to the poor, have yet to be honoured," he said when debating on the presidential address.

However, Mohd Padil said leaders must have a lot of patience because not all of their actions were acceptable by everyone.

For example, on the problem of cronyism and nepotism raised by Umno Youth, he said whether it was true or otherwise depended on one's interpretation of the subject.

"What is important is not to talk from behind. We also do not want to hear that (deputy president) Anwar's men say this and that and the political secretary to (president) Dr Mahathir say this and that.

"There are others who like to take the opportunity to present what they hear to the leaders and hope they will get something in return for providing such information," he added.

Mohd Padil also said the Government should be careful with funds from organisations such as Petronas and the Employees' Provident Fund.

He said should a loan be given from these organisations, the Government must be certain that it was to help the small and medium-scale industries. It must also be certain that the loans could be repaid as it involved public funds, he added.

"The Government must also avoid favouritism when disbursing the loans," he said.

On poison-pen letters and publications aimed at tarnishing the image of leaders, Mohd Padil urged the Home Ministry to take action against those responsible.

"The Ministry should arrest the writer of 50 Dalil Kenapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Menjadi Perdana Menteri as well as those who supported the publication of the book. The writer will not dare write the book if he did not have the support from someone.

"If we do not act, people will say we have no law and anyone can do anything he likes," he added.

A Pahang delegate, Abdul Aziz Rahman, said he wanted to know who owned publications such as Berita Harian, Utusan Malaysia and the New Straits Times and who was responsible for determining the content of the papers.

He said when George Soros agreed with some of the points raised by the Prime Minister during an interview, only The Star published the story in its front page while the other publications buried the report in the inside pages.

He said the mass media should highlight positive stories that benefited the nation.

On education, Abdul Aziz said Petronas, Telekom Malaysia Bhd and Tenaga

Nasional Bhd, which have set up universities, should initiate funds to help Malays pursue professional courses.

He said studying in private institutions of higher learning would cost about RM12,000 a year, which many Malays could not afford.

"How are we going to increase the number of professionals among the Malays if they cannot afford to pursue higher education?" he asked.

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