

17 SEP 1999  
Khalil-Style  
KHALIL ENTERTAINS "SLEEPY" PARTICIPANTS

By: Azman Ujang

TUARAN, Sept 17 (Bernama) -- After three days of taking part in the National Barisan Nasional (BN) Youth Convention deliberations here in preparation for the general election, the more than 300 participants have every reason to feel tired or fall asleep when working papers are presented.

Especially because they had less than three hours of sleep last night after activities stretched until four in the morning.

But a different presentation style adopted by Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakub when presenting his paper clearly had an impact with the participants who come from throughout the country suddenly looking alert.

They seemed entertained and kept laughing at the jokes that were interspersed in Khalil's presentation of a serious topic -- searching a winning formula for the BN in the election expected to be held before the end of the year.

Probably realising that the participants lacked sleep, Khalil entered the convention hall at Sabandar Bay beach resort and started his talk by focussing not on a political issue but on Viagra and Tongkat Ali, both used by men to enhance sexual performance.

"People like me who are in the early 60's are said to at the wildest stage, more so with the help of Viagra now," he said to loud cheers from the floor.

Relating the experience of a man whose entire body became stiff after taking two Viagra pills, Khalil advised people not to be fooled by the aphrodisiac value claims of various roots.

"I heard that in Pahang the supply of these roots ran out some time back resulting in some people selling coconut tree roots for RM50 by claiming them to be Tongkat Ali roots," he said, making the atmosphere in the hall more lively.

Khalil, who served as the BN director of operations during the Sabah state election in February, said that after staying in Sabah for over a month at that time his wife remarked that he spoke with a Sabah accent.

"I spoke like a Sabahan...my wife asked me if I had a young wife in Sabah. No, I have only one wife.

"I told her I can't get the tastiest food anywhere except at home. Only then she stopped being jealous," he said.

Khalil's working paper, distributed to the participants earlier, merely contained brief "talking points" unlike most working papers.

And as he spoke, Khalil several times asked the participants to stand straight, telling them sometimes to stomp their feet to make sure they were paying attention.

Turning to more serious matters, he said the election this time was confronted with issues that were "so sensitive and complicated" including the Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim issue.

This required BN ceramah speakers to fully understand the background and perspectives of the issues to be able to convince the voters.

The speakers, he stressed, must retain the BN culture of moderation as opposed to the harsh and extreme method employed by the opposition.

"We concede that the people prefer to listen to opposition ceramahs to the extent of being awed. They (opposition parties) can make all kinds of promises, accusations and so forth. That's not our culture," he said.

"They go for the extreme and fanatical ways. We don't like to punish others. Our style is more refined. This is the difference between us and the opposition parties," he said.

Khalil, who is also the information minister, said Prime Minister and BN Chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had directed all BN leaders to personally meet or interact with every component party member before the election is called for.

He said the BN had 4.8 million members with Umno alone accounting for 2.7 million or 52 per cent of the registered voters in the country.

"We are a force to be reckoned with in terms of numbers. We are already a very big party," he said.

Khalil said the BN this time would not wait until its list of candidates was announced before activating its election machinery like it was doing in previous elections.

"Certain constituencies wait for their candidates before activating their election machinery. The one competing is the party, not names of individuals.

"For BN, it is the scale (BN symbol) that is competing, and the election machinery must be activated without waiting for the candidate's name to be announced," said Khalil, giving another indication that the polls will be held soon.

Khalil spoke at length on the importance of "operations rooms" in preparing for the election. According to him, an election was like a "war" which required a "war plan, game plan, operations room, commander-in-chief, regional commanders dan armaments like rockets and tanks".

This, said Khalil, was very important for the winning formula being developed by the BN which was "confident of retaining a two-thirds majority" in the coming election.

Khalil wants overlapping activities in managing BN operations rooms to be avoided, with focus given to one operations room per constituency.

"This time the activities will be focussed on the Umno operations room which are already well equipped to serve as BN operations room," he said, adding that a major part of BN's operations cost was borne by Umno in all general elections.

The four-day convention, attended by members of the 14 BN component parties' youth wings, ends tomorrow with an address by Dr Mahathir.

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