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Praise for fighting cause of Islam

THE Umno general assembly yesterday passed the motion on religion and social issues after 13 speakers took to the floor.

The motion, proposed by Ibrahim Azmi Hassan of Terengganu and seconded by Othman Desa of Penang, was unanimously passed after the last three speakers yesterday morning.

The motion, among others, seeks:

- * to record its appreciation of and gratitude to Umno leaders who have emphasised Islam as a basis for unity, developing civilisation and strengthening Islamic faith;

- * to support the Government's efforts to increase the efficiency of Islamic administration and management and to ensure that religious institutions move in tandem with the mainstream development;

- * to call on party members, together with the Government, to prevent religious and educational institutions from being used by the Opposition to spread narrow-minded beliefs, contrary to the Islamic faith and the practice of Sunnah Wal Jamaah; and

- * to condemn the irresponsible acts of political parties exploiting the religion for their political ends, contradicting Islamic teachings like condoning profanity and labelling other Muslims as infidels.

Muin Abdul Manaf of the Federal Territory Umno division, urged the courts to impose a dress code for accused, especially Muslims, to protect the image of Islam and prevent misconception among non-Muslims.

Muin, deputy chairman of Bandar Tun Razak Umno division, said it had been the norm among some criminals to project a "pious image" once they were being prosecuted in courts.

"They start wearing skullcaps complete with jubah (robe) and spot a goatie as if they are very religious.

"Such a portrayal can affect the image of Muslims and should be stopped," he said when debating the motion.

He said projecting such an image would be bad for Islam and could give the wrong impression of the religion to non-Muslims.

As such, it is appropriate that some kind of dress code be imposed especially on Muslims facing criminal charges in courts, he said, adding that this could protect the image of Muslims and Islam.

Muin also said that Umno had always been fighting for the cause of Islam compared to Pas which only claimed that it was an Islamic party.

"Umno is a party which does not talk much but work ... What has Pas done? How many religious schools has it built?"

So far the party had only built Sekolah Agama Rakyat (private religious schools) but the safety features left much to be desired, he added.

He cited an incident in Kedah where several students of a Pas-run religious school were killed in a fire which gutted the school.

In the end, he said Umno had to chip in to help rebuild the school.

Umno, on the other hand, had been building Islamic higher learning institutions including the International Islamic University.

He also commended the Government for providing minimal bonus for civil servants and increase the salary of teachers.

These were signs that the economy is picking up and he hoped that Malaysia could become the first Islamic nation to achieve developed nation status.

Umno should organise political ceramah on a continuous basis as this

would not only introduce the party to outsiders but also remind members of their responsibilities to the party.

A delegate said this was vital as members needed to be reminded from time to time of their roles and responsibilities.

Arof Saad, representing Perlis Umno, said party members should be often reminded of the negative approach used by Pas to gain support.

They must remain united to counter baseless accusations hurled at the Barisan Nasional government leaders and also other allegations as these divided the people.

Certain quarters spread lies through the Internet that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was taken ill while performing the haj recently.

Malacca representative Idderis Kassim said Pas still refused to accept the fact that the Barisan Nasional government had succeeded in promoting Islamic values although Muslim countries had recognised this.

While foreigners came to Malaysia to learn about Islamic banking and the administration of other religious bodies, Pas claimed the Government had failed to implement the Islamic concept in its administration.

"We have primary and secondary schools, have trained teachers to conduct religious and Quran reading classes and set up Islamic colleges, but what have Pas done?"

(END)