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Umno-Debate

UMNO SHOULD EMERGE AS PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT, ASSEMBLY TOLD

KUALA LUMPUR, June 21 (Bernama) -- A Negeri Sembilan delegate today reminded Umno that it needs to emerge as a people's movement aware of issues and actions of the masses as well as preferences of the younger generations if it is to perpetuate its cause and survival.

Shaziman Abu Mansor, who was debating the presidential address on the first day of the 55th Umno General Assembly, said that at the same time Umno also needed to initiate a cultural revolution in the context of preserving the Malay identity.

This should be designed to ensure that Umno remain solid and a lynch-pin of the Malay cause, the role it first assumed more than 55 years ago, said Shaziman, who is also the Member of Parliament for Tampin.

He said these proposals should form key elements for party's strategy in facing the next general election.

In his two-hour address to the assembly the Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who dwelled on the Malay nature of being easily forgetful, touched on unity, mastery of knowledge and the economy, the history of colonisation and the politics of the opposition.

Selangor delegate Datuk Mufti Shuib called on party members to be more bold in defending Umno from attacks by enemies within and outside the country and not leave such tasks solely to the party leaders.

"All this while each time Umno is lambasted as being corrupted, unIslamic, not helping the Malays, infidels and what have you, only the party president was left to counter these charges while the rest only keep quiet. This cannot go on forever," he said.

Representing Perak, the Chenderoh division deputy leader Shaarani Abdullah said party members should not use the Umno Disciplinary Board to get even with fellow members.

He charged that there were members who kept on lodging complaints against another despite the board declaring the member concerned innocent of any wrongdoing after its probe.

The board's decision should not be disputed but accepted by all concerned, including the complainant once it rejected his complaint, Shaarani said.

Johor Wanita delegate Halimah Sadique urged the government to take legal action against those challenging Malay special rights.

As for the Malays, she called on them to take efforts to deepen their understanding of their rights and why they should defend the privileges.

Perlis delegate Ismail Kasim said Umno should start making preparations immediately to face the next general election with a special mission to regain control of Kelantan and Terengganu now run by PAS.

This would require new approaches that match current political environment, he said, adding that one strategy should be to win back the support teachers who once formed the backbone of Umno.

The delegate from Kuala Lipis Mustafa Long urged the Umno leadership to assume a tougher posture against opposition parties which often hid under the guise of democracy and human rights to incite and spread anti-government sentiments.

According to Mustafa, the government had given too much space to the opposition to pursue their own ends in various ways imaginable, including the print media.

-- BERNAMA

WNZ PR RYN