
'Umno did not exploit forum'

Nst 27 MAY 2002

KUANTAN, Sun. — Umno should not be accused of setting up and exploiting the forum on Palestine for its own political interest as both Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad were given equal opportunity to speak on the issue.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said this when commenting on a column in the Pas party organ, *Harakah*, which criticised Fadzil and Pas leaders for taking part in the event. The column said the forum had deviated from its purpose of showing unity for Palestine.

The May 8 forum, organised by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and the Malaysian Muslim Youth Movement (Abim), was attended by leaders and members of Pas, Umno, other political parties and the public.

The column in the English section of *Harakah* also alleged that Dr Mahathir was trying to divide Muslim unity on the Palestinian issue ahead of his visit with United States President George W. Bush.

It said Fadzil and Pas leaders should have walked out of the hall when they realised that Dr Mahathir was trying to break Muslim solidarity with his speech.

Najib said both the leaders were given an equal and fair chance to speak at the forum which was shown live on RTM.