

Can Umno AGM be a catalyst to transform the party?

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KUALA LUMPUR - The 61st Umno General Assembly that starts on Tuesday is expected to be a catalyst for members to rebuild its political reputation and rise from the dilemma of the 2008 General Election.

Delegates are expected to be reminded of the need for Umno to continue its struggle, transform and adapt to the new political landscape and remain relevant after the 2008 political tsunami.

Time and again Umno leaders, both past and present, have reminded Umno members to remain relevant and inclusive, not only for the sake of Malays but also to gain the support of other races.

It was in line with the 1Malaysia concept propagated by Umno President Najib Abdul Razak when he became the sixth Prime Minister of Malaysia in April 2009, aimed at ensuring peace and stability in pursuit of achieving a high income nation by 2020.

Umno, the largest party in the country with 3.4 million members, cannot be seen as a party that engages itself in internal conflicts but rather should work towards achieving a bigger victory for Umno and Barisan Nasional (BN).

Last June, Najib had urged all component parties in BN to stop internal conflicts and channel their focus on strengthening their respective parties and BN.

"As a component of BN, we must ensure BN remains strong. We must not allow room for internal crisis in the party and worst still allow it to be exposed to the public.

"We must be 'fighting' against the opposition and not among ourselves," said Najib when opening the People's Progressive Party (PPP) assembly.

Umno, as the pioneer or backbone of the ruling coalition, must be exemplary to all the component parties and not just rely on the weakness of the opposition, to gain support.

To ensure Umno remains relevant, well into the 21st century, Najib had yesterday proposed a New Political Model to ensure Umno's role as the leader in steering the country's administration.

Apart from introducing radical measures, Umno also continues efforts to resolve issues at state level, especially in Terengganu, through the Terengganu Umno Convention 2010, which showed that the state Umno which had been embroiled in an internal conflict previously, had resolved the issues.

Umno vice president Hishammuddin Hussein who is also Umno Terengganu Liaison Chief said the convention was to discuss the direction and future of the party, as well as overcoming misunderstandings that had plagued the state Umno in the past.

Meanwhile, Umno Youth Chief Khairy Jamaluddin when commenting the 'chaos' during the Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) divisional elections, reminded Umno members that the people were watching the party's strength.

"We must strengthen ourselves and not look at the weakness of the opposition," he said.

The Umno General Assembly which kicks off with the assembly of three Umno wings that will be opened by Umno Deputy President and Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, would be attended by 4,907 delegates comprising 2,543 delegates for the Umno General Assembly, 793 for Wanita, 795 for Youth and 776 for Puteri. — Bernama

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