

Umno veeps caught unawares by Ahmad Maslan's remarks

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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 29 — Three senior Umno leaders were caught unawares by a fellow Umno leader's claims that Malays are losing power and that DAP is an agent of Christianisation.

Umno vice-presidents Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal, Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein and Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi appeared surprised when asked to comment on remarks made by Datuk Ahmad Maslan earlier today that suggested a worst-case scenario for Malays if Pakatan Rakyat (PR) made more gains in the next general election.

The Umno information chief had claimed that Malays would lose everything to the Chinese should the country experience a "hung Parliament" scenario like Australia.

"We didn't hear that point. I don't think we want to raise it here, it was not raised during the taklimat (presidential address)," Hishammuddin told reporters today at a press conference following the Umno presidential address.

"You have to ask penerangan (information department)," he quickly added.

Ahmad had earlier accused opposition party DAP of disrespecting the royal institution as well as the national language, claiming that even Islam would be "lost" if PR won more seats.

"Say goodbye to Islam, because they (DAP) are agents of Christianisation ... in talking about the Malay agenda we cannot run away from this," said Ahmad.

Stressing that the threat of "Malays losing power" was very real, Ahmad claimed that the Chinese community was slowly gaining control of the country's politics and economy.

This, he said, was because the Chinese were currently leading in voter registration.

Umno is currently holding what is likely to be its last general assembly before a general election expected early next year.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak is said to need a marked improvement from the last polls to retain his position as only a return of Barisan Nasional's customary two-thirds majority of Parliament can guarantee he remains in office.

BN ceded 82 federal seats and five state governments to the opposition in the landmark March 2008 election.

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