

In Umno battle, Ali Rustam joins list of saviours protecting Malays from others
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Add Umno vice-president aspirant Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam to the growing list of party officials who believe that the best way to win big in the party polls next month is to play the role of saviour to Malays under siege.

The former Malacca chief minister, who blamed Chinese voters for his defeat in Election 2013, has been making the rounds to meet party delegates, using that loss and the current antipathy in Umno towards non-Malays to boost his chances of emerging as one of the three party vice-presidents in the October 19 elections.

Other candidates in Umno such as incumbent vice-president Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Umno Youth chief aspirant Akhramsyah Muammar Ubaidah Sanusi have also been playing the Malay rights card in this year's race.

In an interview with The Malaysian Insider, Ali said his mission was to strengthen Umno against groups such as DAP and Chinese educationist group Dong Zong as only through political means can the Malays be kept safe.

"Groups like DAP and Dong Zong are out to sideline Malay rights... they want to remove them from the Federal Constitution because they do not like it. But the Malays don't do such things towards other races," he said in a telephone interview.

Ali said the demands of these groups were "unconstitutional".

"This was what was feared before independence and it has now come true," he added.

Asked if he intends to turn Umno into a right-wing Malay group akin to Perkasa, Ali said, "I do not want to refer to anyone, but we (Umno) have our own way of doing things."

He said it was not necessary for Umno to emulate any Malay right-wing group or those calling for stern action to be taken against the alleged anti-Malay groups.

"I will do things according to the Constitution, unlike some who have been very inconsiderate in their demands."

"What is wrong with the Malay privileges? It was discussed before independence to have such provisions... Why are some groups displaying extreme intolerance towards this matter now?" the former Malacca chief minister asked.

He said the biggest problem facing the country at this time was intolerance, and certain quarters were raising questions pertaining to equality and making comparisons with the special privileges for the Malays.

"Some people just do not learn or respect. The Constitution lists in detail the Malay rights mainly, so stop questioning and respect the rights of the Malay," said the popular politician.

Ali, who is Malacca Barisan Nasional chairman and an Umno supreme council member, told

Astro Awani last May that Chinese voters did not appreciate the services and efforts of the BN government in developing Malacca and safeguarding the welfare of the people.

He contested the Bukit Katil parliament constituency in the 13th general election, losing by a 5,447 majority to Malacca PKR chairman Shamsul Iskandar Mohd Akin who obtained 46,167 votes.

BN secured 21 state seats in Malacca in the May 5 polls, two less than the 23 seats won in the 12th general election.

There's a six-way fight for the three Umno vice-presidents' posts in next month's election.

Incumbents Ahmad Zahid, Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal and Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein are defending their posts.

The other two in the fray are Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir and former Negeri Sembilan menteri besar Tan Sri Mohd Isa Samad. - September 30, 2013.

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