

Umno anniversary: UiTM students claim told to make bash livelier

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More than 1,000 UiTM students attend Umno's 71st anniversary celebrations at Bukit Jalil National Stadium as part of requirements for their co-curricular module.

KUALA LUMPUR: More than 1,000 UiTM students were brought to the Bukit Jalil National Stadium here under a "voluntary patriotism" programme to participate in UMNO's 71st anniversary celebration today.

Some of them were excited to be there, as they admitted to FMT, feeling upbeat about being among the "volunteers" for the event.

They said they arrived at the venue as early as 11am and were told to make the event "more lively".

FMT spoke to a group of muamalat (Islamic finance) degree students who said they were here as part of the requirements for their co-curricular module at the public university.

"There are about 1,000 of us. We were driven here in a bus from the Shah Alam UiTM," said the group's spokesperson, who wanted to be known only as Syida.

"We had to volunteer at the UMNO sports event for the past couple of days. Today, our duty is to make the event livelier."

Syida, 22, added that they were also provided with free food all day long. And once the event ends, they will receive a "participation certificate".

The university's choir team, none of whom wished to be named, said about 80 members of the team were at Bukit Jalil today.

"We're here to sing Negaraku (the national anthem) on the stage," they said.

Earlier today, PKR Youth deputy chief Dr Afif Bahardin said a parent had sent a WhatsApp message with a photo of a circular making it mandatory for all students of Shah Alam UiTM to participate in a "voluntary patriotism" activity at Bukit Jalil today.

Similar circulars were said to be issued by other UiTM campuses in the country.

Afif then urged UiTM vice-chancellor Hassan Said to issue a clarification on the gatherings and whether they constituted “organised efforts to mobilise and manipulate the students”.

But a former vice-chancellor of UiTM, Prof Emeritus Sahol Hamid Abu Bakar, told FMT today that UMNO had the right to ask the university to mobilise its students.

He pointed out that the university was created by Umno for Malays and Bumiputeras.

“It is, therefore, not wrong for Umno to ask UiTM to send its students (for the party’s celebrations). It’s a learning process, part of the knowledge they should have.

“The origins of UiTM should be made known to its students.

“UiTM is a university for Malays and Bumis (Bumiputeras). UMNO is a Malay party.

“So, it’s logical it (the rally) should be attended by Malay students.”

FMT is still awaiting UiTM’s response.

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