

Umno needs drastic change to stay in govt, analysts say

7 MONTHS AGO

Minderjeet Kaur

Academic says that apart from urban and rural Malay voters, the party must also woo the Chinese and Indians.



IIUM's Syed Arabi Idid says Umno's tactics of boycotting and attacking DAP MPs were outdated and no longer resonate with Malay voters.

PETALING JAYA: Umno must shed its racist image and abandon its aggressive demeanour if it wants to return as a partner in the unity government after the next general election, political analysts say.

They said the party must also appeal to a Malay electorate that is more sophisticated and regain the support of those in the heartland.

Syed Arabi Idid of the International Islamic University Malaysia said it is essential for Umno to adopt a more inclusive strategy.

“Its tactic of boycotting and attacking the DAP and its MPs no longer works, even with Malay voters,” he pointed out.



“Malay voters have changed,” he added.

At the Negeri Sembilan Barisan Nasional convention over the weekend Umno president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the party’s cooperation with the Anwar Ibrahim-led unity government will last until the next general election.

However, the party’s youth chief Dr Akmal Saleh has been leading racially charged attacks on the DAP and calling for a boycott of businesses.



Syed Arabi Idid.

Syed Arabi told FMT Umno will have to change its approach if it wants to be allotted winnable seats and face up to Perikatan Nasional (PN) in the next general election.

“Umno must also strengthen itself. If Pakatan Harapan (PH) gives it good seats and it loses, it will weaken the unity government,” he added.

Syed Arabi advised Umno to focus on practical issues that matter to today’s Malay electorate, such as the rising cost of living, economic uncertainty and anti-corruption reforms.

He said Umno’s long history in government still gives it symbolic value in the eyes of many Malays, and the party should use this legacy to reconnect with voters.

“They need to capitalise on this instead of criticising other races,” he said.



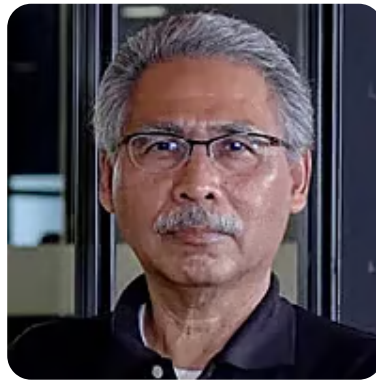
Jayum Jawan.

Jayum Jawan, a fellow at the Academy of Sciences Malaysia, pointed out that the Malay voters are no longer the kampung folk of the past.

“They represent urban and rural identities, each with unique needs, but Umno has failed to evolve with changing voter expectations,” he told FMT.

He said the controversy surrounding Zahid, such as his corruption charges and the lack of significant reforms to restore confidence, would keep Umno’s credibility among Malay voters fragile.

“Zahid’s leadership has been marked by a lack of innovation,” he said, adding that Umno’s leadership must have a broader appeal to survive.



Azmi Hassan.

Azmi Hassan of Akademi Nusantara said the grand old Malay party must recapture Malay votes from PN, a coalition led by PAS and Bersatu.

“Umno’s task is daunting but critical. Since the 2022 general elections, Malay support is still largely with PN,” he said.

He also said Umno would likely need to continue working with PH to attract Chinese and Indian voters, given its diminished appeal with these groups.



AHMAD ZAHID HAMIDI

ANWAR IBRAHIM

PAKATAN HARAPAN

PH

UMNO

UNITY GOVERNMENT