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Gauging response to Dr M's call

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MALACCA, Sun. - The Umno party leadership will observe the coming branch elections to see how those at the grass roots level are adopting the call for reformation of the Bumiputera community.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the branch elections, to be held from April 1 to May 15, would indicate how well members had responded towards the call by the party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for reformation of the Malay community.

"As mentioned by Dr Mahathir during the last General Assembly in October, the Malay community should be agents of change in leading the country into the next century.

"To perform this task, Malays should prevent themselves from being lax as they must work hard so that other communities in Malaysia will be able to follow their example."

Najib, who is also Education Minister, said this in his speech at the launch of the State level Umno Reformation of the Malay Community gathering at the Expo site in Ayer Keroh today.

"Those who have been elected must have the proper vision in leading the Malay community in their move towards this change so we will be exemplary to the other communities," he said.

Therefore, he added it was necessary that members at the grass roots level use this opportunity to elect those who had the proper vision and qualification to lead them.

But Najib added that calls for reformation and change did not mean the abandonment of the noble values of the Malays.

"What the party leadership stresses is for the whole Malay community to change towards progress while at the same time preserving our rich culture, heritage and values," he said, adding that Malay values were also needed to bring the community forward beyond the 2020 target.

Najib said in calling for this change, it was truly upsetting to find that there was a high incidence of social degradation among the Malay community of today.

"This is why Dr Mahathir has called for the restructuring of the community, so we (Malays) must continue to be steadfast and be able to resist negative values," he said.

Meanwhile, State Umno liaison committee chairman and Supreme Council member, Datuk Seri Mohd Zin Abdul Ghani in his speech called on the Malay community to strive for progress while at the same time preserving the old values and traditions which had made the society great.

"People in the West will be looking at how successful the Malay community will be in leading Malaysia towards progress as they have the perception that Malays and Muslims are backward.

"Therefore, it is up to us to disprove such notions as the world will be looking at our country due to our rapid progress," he said.

Also present were Supreme Council member and Deputy Transport Minister Datuk Mohd Ali Rustam, State Umno liaison secretary Datuk Sahar Arpan and 2,500 members.

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