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Umno attracts more than 87,000 new members

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Umno's membership drive has attracted more than 87,000 new members nationwide.

Party vice-president Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak said it showed that the party was relevant and popular among the people.

"This campaign has been well-received by the rakyat. But we must intensify our efforts to strengthen the party's foothold among the Malays.

"It is hoped that the success of the campaign thus far, will spur all Umno divisions and branches to redouble their efforts to attract more new members," Najib, who is Umno Membership and Voters Registration Bureau chairman, said at the launching of the Federal Territory Umno membership drive.

Also present were Umno executive secretary Senator Datuk Tengku Adnan Mansor, Wanita Umno vice head Datuk Shahrizat Jalil and Lembah Pantai division chief Raja Nong Chik Raja Zainal Abidin.

The largest number of new members came from Kedah with 21,743 and Terengganu with 12,359.

Najib said among the reasons why Umno was gaining popularity was due to the country's leadership stance on international issues, especially the Afghanistan-United States crisis.

Besides, he said, the announcement by Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that Malaysia was an Islamic state was another reason why the party was becoming more prominent.

At a Press conference later, Najib said the Federal Territory campaign would also look into the problem of phantom branches.

"There are branches set up, especially in the Federal Territory, where the membership in an area was questionable. When we checked the branches, we found that the members were from different areas, or that they don't exist at all."

He also said the increase in membership in Terengganu was a reflection of the State populace's dissatisfaction with Pas' performance.

In Gua Musang, Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein said the movement had recruited 75,000 new members since it embarked on a membership drive two months ago.

He said the latest figure brought its total membership to 750,000 which is an increase of 10 per cent.

Asked if he was satisfied with the figure, he said people must bear in mind that those above 40 ceased to become members of the wing.

"Recruitment of new members is an agenda of the movement," Hishammuddin, who is also the Youth and Sports Minister, said after launching the Program Pemuda Masuk Kampung at Kampung Bertam Baru.

Besides this, he said the movement was also active in registering its members as voters.

"We are working closely with party vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

"I have asked all State and divisional Youth heads to determine the whereabouts of every member and do the necessary," he said, adding if divisions or branches experienced a shortage of membership forms, they could obtain them from the Umno Youth headquarters.

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