

Genuine friendship which cannot be bought, Najib reminisces
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It was a nostalgic moment for Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak as he met with friends and acquaintances from the time he had led the Umno Youth wing.

Najib said some of them are still active in politics and in their careers, some have retired while some have passed on and were represented by their widows and children.

"I was touched by their presence, (they) came from all over Malaysia to spend time with me," he added in a blog posting on yesterday's meeting.

The prime minister noted that the bond among them is not based on material value, but on genuine friendship that cannot be bought or sold.

"We will remain together, whatever the circumstances.

"I believe none among my friends will flee (in times of crisis) or betray our loyalty pledge as members of Umno, the party that we cherish," he said.

Najib said although most of them are in their 60s, their spirit to defend Umno and continue the party struggle has not mellowed with age.

"These are the friends I can count on to defend me, not only as Umno president but also as a friend whom they have known for decades," he added.

Najib also pointed out that all those who attended the meeting are part of history because without the support of the Youth wing during the 1987 internal conflict, it would have been impossible for Umno to rise from that divisive episode.

However, the prime minister chose not to elaborate on the matter.

It is often said that then Umno president Dr Mahathir Mohamad had managed to edge his challenger Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah during that period because of Najib's support.

However, Mahathir, who was once considered as Najib's mentor, is now on a relentless campaign to oust the prime minister.

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