

AGM shows Najib in undisputed position of power

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UMNO AGM This year's Umno annual general assembly ended with party president Najib Abdul Razak in a position of undisputed power.

It was a complete shift from last year's AGM, where Najib had to contend with internal rumblings due to a falling out between him and his then deputy Muhyiddin Yassin.

The premier, later in his closing speech, said this year's AGM was "the best" in his 40 years of involvement in politics.

"This is because the Umno leadership is firm in its position, they are walak (loyal to one's leader), committed. And this is the Umno team who will fight till the end," he said.

Najib's confidence that he had quashed any internal challenges to his rule was best captured in his remarks about Umno de facto number two Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

"I have never doubted my deputy's loyalty - he can stand behind me and I will not be worried," he said, much to the amusement of the delegates.

Zahid had earlier 'gifted' Najib with the delegates' full show of walak.

"As delegates, our walak is undivided, let us rise to give our full walak to the president, give a round of applause to our party president!" Zahid urged the delegates.

Leading a round of "Hidup Najib", which was cried out thrice, Zahid added that his walak for Najib was undivided,

Najib, he added, has done good to the country's rakyat and not just to Umno members as he is a "prime minister for all".

Wanita Umno chief Shahrizat Jalil and Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin had also pledged their loyalty in their closing speeches.

Khairy said that Umno Youth members were still loyal to Najib as the latter always fulfilled the various requests asked of him.

This show of loyalty comes just months after Umno rebels like Muhyiddin and former vice-president and Semporna MP Shafie Apdal formed their own opposition parties.

Umno vice-president Hishammuddin Hussein said there was still much uncertainty about the party's strength then, and related his concerns when he was asked to open the Semporna Umno division annual meeting this year.

“A thousand and one questions filled my head, my feelings were all mixed up... At that time Umno was said to be dead in Semporna,” Hishammuddin said.

However, he said his fears were for naught, as Umno was still strong in Semporna.

The loyalty showered upon Najib was in stark contrast to the treatment given to his predecessor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Abdullah had been ousted from office just a year after BN was denied two-thirds majority for the first time in the 2008 elections.

However, Najib led BN to an even worse showing in 2013.

Beating the war drums for the next polls

But now, confident that his position is unshakeable, Najib is beating the war drums for the next election.

“We have solved our internal problems in Umno. It’s no longer a question where we are headed. The 14th general election,” he said.

In a possible effort to bolster Umno’s chances in this coming polls, the AGM was used to hit out at their competitors, including one of their biggest critics today, former president turned opposition Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia chairperson Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Hishammuddin pointed out how, in the past that Mahathir had urged loyalty to the Umno presidency, but is now criticising party members for doing just that.

“Cakap tak serupa bikin, bikin tak serupa cakap (You say one thing but do another),” Hishammuddin said bluntly.

But the biggest target painted by Umno was on the back of DAP, which Najib himself singled out in his opening speech as an anti-Islam and anti-Malay party.

He drove the point home further today when he showed a video by former DAP man Hew Kuan Yew telling Sarawakians to let the “Malays screw the Malays”.

Najib also used this year’s AGM to boost ties with PAS, highlighting how he and the Islamist party’s president Abdul Hadi Awang will be turning up at a rally together tomorrow.

Despite the many urgings for the party to get itself ready for the election, it is still unclear when they will ultimately be held.

Najib continues to remain coy on the matter and has yet to give hints on when the election will be held.

Asked during the press conference after the AGM’s conclusion on candidates for the next election, Najib said they will know how to manage when it comes to choosing candidates

when the time comes.

“Now we want to focus on efforts to be near and to solve the rakyat’s problems,” he said.

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