

Najib rallies Umno faithful at 64th anniversary
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Umno members should make the struggle for the people as a personal pride to enable them to be leaders who are close to the community, said party president Najib Razak.

He said to be close to the people's hearts, Umno leaders must always work and carry out programmes continuously and not only going down to the grassroots during election times.

NONE "To be leaders who are close to the people, we must work for them throughout the year, not scour all over the places to prepare our personal data when the elections are around the corner.

"Now is the time to show that we are leaders who are always fighting for the interest of the people. This is Umno that we all must take pride of," he said at the Umno 64th anniversary celebration at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) last night.

Present were Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin and his wife, Norainee Abdul Rahman, vice-presidents Hishammuddin Hussein and Mohd Shafie Apdal, BN component party leaders, and former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife, Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

Earlier, the prime minister praised the spirit of a veteran Umno member who took a six-hour bus ride to attend the ceremony.

NONE "Emulate the spirit of this fighter. Out of love for the party, he was willing to take a six-hour bus ride to attend the ceremony (tahlil prayer and Yasin recitation).

"Out of our love for Umno, we must be willing to fight for the people's interest to the end," he said to the applause of 3,000 Umno members and guests.

"I feel humbled to see the face of this fighter... if he wants something, I feel it is already too late for him to ask. When I asked why he came, he said he came solely out of his love for the party," said Najib.

He said this spirit should be emulated and upheld by party members, no matter how old or young they were, to ensure that the party would continue to be respected.

Umno regaining Malay support

NONE Najib said although Umno was regaining the support of the Malays, party members should not fight only for certain groups, instead they should work in the interest of all as it was the key to the success of a party.

Najib reminded the party of the fall of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which was defeated by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) after a 54-year rule.

"We must remind ourselves that as a political party that has ruled for over 50 years through 12 general elections, Umno is still facing many challenges.

NONE "Therefore, we must learn from what is happening to another party, which is as old as Umno, but today has become the opposition," he said.

Describing this year's celebration as more lively than the previous years', he said: "Perhaps the mood in Umno today has changed for the better, (we are) more confident about the future of the party.

"The yardstick is the two by-elections (Bagan Pinang and Hulu Selangor) which clearly showed that the Malays, although not all, have returned to Umno.

"Therefore, I feel grateful that our efforts have borne fruit. As we celebrate Umno's 64th anniversary, I feel optimistic about the party's future."

- Bernama

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