

Set aside caste-based politics, Najib tells MIC
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MIC needs to set aside its tacit caste-based politics if it wants to see changes in party leadership, said BN chairperson Najib Abdul Razak.

Picking his words carefully, Najib "gently" told the 3,000 delegates at the party's 64th annual general meeting in Kuala Lumpur to choose their leaders based on their abilities, not on their social or caste standing.

"I don't know if should say it, but I will say it anyway. (The caste system) should not be the key determinant when choosing leaders.

"Choose them based on capability. It doesn't matter if they are slightly higher or lower," said Najib, who is also Prime Minister.

Najib also spoke of his observations and his brush with the system that has plagued the party for decades.

"It's true. I know someone who would not place garlands on someone else because he may be of a lower caste," he said.

The caste system, though not widely spoken of, is a dominant factor in the party, especially during party polls. Party leadership and members are split along caste lines.

Umno, on the contrary, has no caste system in place, said Najib.

"Sons of fishermen can become menteri besar, while sons of farmers can become ministers. We all have social mobility.

mic congress 2 2010" Just because someone is of a lower caste does not mean he is condemned (to being in a low position) forever. Umno is changing, so you all must also change," said Najib.

Najib also urged MIC delegates to put past MIC controversies behind them.

"Since the 12th general elections, we have all gone on a soul-searching process and we realise that our strengths must be defended and our weakness rectified.

"Like Maika. We are already rectifying this and every single shareholder will get their money back," he said in reference to the MIC investment arm.

In April, local shipping magnate G Gnanalingam offered to buy up Maika Holdings Berhad and provide Indian shareholders a chance to cash out their investments.