

Najib to abolish Umno's quota system
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Najib Abdul Razak is seriously considering to abolish the quota system in the Umno elections. He says the party constitution will be amended in the near future for the purpose.

The new Umno president conceded today that it was time for Umno to revise its quota system in order to ensure the 'survival' of the party.

"At this moment, one needs votes from 56 divisions in order to stand for election as president. It is impossible to get 56 votes. It is impossible.

"To stand for election as deputy president, one needs 20 votes. What if someone gets 19 votes, short of one vote to qualify for the election?

"This will incur various accusations, whether that is a reality or a perception. That is why we will reconsider the quota system," he told delegates in his inaugural speech as Umno's 7th president at the close of the party assembly.

Not real reflections

Najib also mentioned that another assembly will be held later this year to amend the party constitution, adding that reforms will be undertaken to increase the number of Umno members who are eligible to vote for high leadership positions.

"At this moment, only 2,600 members have the right to choose top leaders in Umno. Even delegates who have gathered in this assembly comprise 7,000 Umno members.

"Many opine that the will of the 2,600 do not reflect the needs and aspirations of three million Umno members.

"There are also those who bet for these 2,600 delegates, we can not only memorise their names, but also recognise their faces, remember their telephone numbers and ways of greeting, whether it is an 'S.K. greeting' (salam kosong - greetings without vested interest) or an 'S.I. greeting' (salam isi - greetings with vested interest).

"That is why, we need to realise that clean image of Umno, the clean leadership selection process of Umno, and the integrity of Umno all serve as the assurance of our leadership as a venerable party.

The incoming prime minister warned that if Umno leaders continue to be tainted, then people will lose faith in them, stressing that this clean image of Umno and its leaders must be protected at all times.

In the later part of his speech, Najib slammed those who practiced slander in thinly-veiled criticism directed at the opposition, especially PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim.

He remarked that justice should not have double standards, one for the government and one for the opposition.

"Whenever we bring the opposition to courts, the opposition will say that the judges are partial. However, when various figures of the government are accused of certain things, they are assumed to be true.

"Evidence that never existed is created, photos that never existed are created, while 'witnesses' who are

wrong, are hired.

That was why, Najib said, if this was the interpretation of justice by the opposition, then it would be worse than the rules of the jungle.

"Then whoever who is saved from such laws will be full of lies. The strangest thing is, one of them used to sit in the government. But now that he is in the opposition, he is deemed to be clean as a jewel and fair as a newborn baby.

"In reality, we all know who he really is," Najib said.

Wish for Mahathir and Abdullah

The new president also affirmed the position of Umno as the leader of Barisan Nasional, saying that the efforts of past BN leaders in promoting racial harmony must be continued.

However, he also asked leaders of BN component parties to appreciate that, while Umno takes care of their feelings, they must also take care of the feelings of the Malay people.

He expressed his pride in having both outgoing Umno president Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and former Umno president Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the assembly.

"I have a wish. This wish is for me as well as these two national figures, Tun Dr Mahathir and Pak Lah. I hope that we will, together, discuss the problems of the party and the country.

"Although the initial meeting may be a bit awkward, (I am sure) that after a while, friendship be will be formed, Insha'Allah.

"What is important is not individual feelings, but the future of Umno in this country," added Najib.

At a press conference later, he refused to be drawn in the people he would be picking for his new cabinet.

"Wait until I take over," he said.

Najib also declined to mention when he will be sworn in as the new prime minister.

"Let's PM (Abdullah) seeks audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong first. Everything will be sorted out, don't worry."