

Umno Youth to soothe frayed nerves at assembly

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PUTRAJAYA: Umno Youth will use the party general assembly next week to soothe the frayed nerves of fellow Barisan Nasional youth wings.

Umno Youth chief Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said several issues had caused tension among them in the past year.

He said his wing would explain the Malay agenda as a matter of common interest for all Malaysians in the pursuit of becoming a developed country.

He said youth leaders would be reminded not to play the race and religion cards for instant popularity.

He said the struggle to lift the Malays in education was not only in the interest of Umno, but of all parties Malaysia to attain developed nation status by 2020.

"It is not just because fights for the Malays, it is not a fight for race or religion, but to help anyone who is on the sidelines.

"When we declare ourselves developed in 2020 we don't want to have anyone left behind.

"The issues that Umno Youth will fight are the same ones that have always been on the Malay agenda, and what we should be addressing is the implementation and ensuring there is no waste or leakages," he said at a Press conference yesterday.

Hishammuddin, who is also Education Minister, added that Umno Youth would explain its call last year to revive the New Economic Policy in a manner that all races could accept.

At last year's assembly, Hishammuddin caused some unhappiness among Barisan Nasional component parties when he called for a revival of the NEP and waved a keris to launch Umno Youth's new symbol.

"When we talk of the NEP, we mean the spirit of it.

"Last year we raised the idea, this year we will explain it so that nobody misunderstands and sees it only in the context of race.

"We will also explain the Keris Panca Warisan (Kris of Heritage) and other symbols of our struggle without hurting the feelings of other races."

Hishammuddin said youth leaders would be cautioned not to react emotionally to those who exploited the harmony between the races with SMS or Internet rumours.

"We need leaders with wisdom, maturity, sincerity and honesty, who are consistent and do not play to the gallery, do not seek temporary popularity with their own race and do not use issues that can inflame racial and religious passions."