

Don't sell your souls for money, Umno leaders told

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SUNGAI PETANI: Umno leaders have been reminded not to sell their souls for money.

"The party's struggles will come to nothing if there are members who only rely on getting paid for attending Umno functions," said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Najib, citing the Malay proverb *Belah buluh dengan kapak, kalau hulur baru nampak* (Being visible only when there's gratification).

"If this happens, Umno will only be led by scoundrels who will destroy the party," he said when opening the delegates meeting for the Merbok Umno division at SM Sungai Layar here yesterday.

The party's deputy president said Umno had remained a political institution for the Malays for the past 61 years because the leaders of the golden era had stayed away from money politics.

He called on Umno's 1.3 million members nationwide to keep this party tradition alive and to be "rich with the fighter's soul and spirit" instead.

The Deputy Prime Minister also hinted that the general election would not take place this year.

"Although this is not a year for the general election, Umno members must stay focused on Umno as a political institution and organisation which forms the backbone of Malay unity."

Najib lauded the Merbok division for having a record 5,000 new members and also being free from internal politicking.

On Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim's decision to with-

draw from the contest for the post of Commonwealth secretary-general, Najib said Dr Rais had made the announcement in his personal capacity.

Since the Malaysian Government nominated Dr Rais, we have to let the Prime Minister make a decision on his withdrawal," he added.

Later, Najib presented 10 Umno branches in the Merbok division which had registered the highest number of new members with RM1,000 per branch on behalf of Merbok MP Datuk Zainuddin Maidin.

In **YAN**, Najib said Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) adviser Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was fast losing his grip on the party and support from members.

He said at the Jerai Umno division delegates' meeting at SK Agama Titi Serong that the recent resignation of several key figures in PKR showed that the party had no proper objectives apart from the personal interests of one man.

Najib also said the implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP), which was still relevant today, would be improved so that it would be more acceptable by the other ethnic groups.

"The NEP is still relevant. The Chinese and Indians never disliked the NEP but they were merely uncomfortable with its implementation."

Najib lashed out at certain quarters and an individual who had fully supported the NEP when they were inside Umno but criticised the policy when they were outside the party.

"They merely want to trigger racial and social disharmony in the country when they talk about NEP," he added.

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DATUK SERI NAJIB TUN RAZAK