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L ASSEMBLY

Khairy urges Najib and Muhyiddin to mend ties

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'STAY TOGETHER':
Umno Youth chief says party's No. 1 and 2 are like parents to them

KUALA LUMPUR

UMNO Youth wants party president Datuk Seri Najib Razak and his deputy, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, to continue to work together in the party.

Its chief, Khairy Jamaluddin, said Najib and Muhyiddin were like parents to everyone.

"The No. 1 and 2 must walk and stay together. We love our leaders and will continue to assist them. We are like kids, who do not want to see our parents fight. In the end, the kids won't return home as they can't stand seeing the fight," he said during the winding-up session of the Umno Youth meeting yesterday.

Khairy said Umno Youth wanted Najib and Muhyiddin to be in the same camp and find ways to solve issues besieging the party.

Earlier, during the policy speech, Khairy said Umno should dispel the notion that it was an "exclusive club" and that its membership was reserved for a selected few.

"This is not everyone's opinion, but we still hear complaints that Umno is exclusive and does not open its doors to Malays from all backgrounds to contribute to the party."

He said the professional urbanites who spoke English were regarded with suspicion and those who were progressive were accused of betraying their people.

"If a professor wants to contribute



Umno vice-presidents **Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi** (right) and **Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein** (second from right) cheering on as Umno Youth chief **Khairy Jamaluddin** (left) delivers his speech during the Umno Youth meeting at the Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Pic by Aizuddin Saad

to Umno, if he is even a little critical, they are sidelined and said to be theoretical and, therefore, told to stay in university. Young folk with moustaches like 'Wak Doyok' are called posers. Religious folk with long beards are rejected and accused of supporting Pas," said Khairy, who is the youth and sports minister.

Likening Umno to a large tent, he urged the party to re-establish itself as the representative of Malays.

"Let us stop making Umno an exclusive club. Umno must return to being a big tent for us to become strong again. Do not push aside the opinions of people who are different from mainstream Umno."

"Take time to listen. Seek a way to find a middle ground. We believe in *wasatiyyah*. If we push aside Malays because they look and think differently, we will become a group that is small and weak," he said.

Touching on the cost of living, he called upon the government and the party leadership to put a stop to the

recent spate of price hikes across the country.

"I do not have to speak at length on this. We know that 2015 has been a year where people have been shocked by price hikes. One by one, price and fees go up, putting more burden on the people."

He said while Umno Youth understood the rationale behind the Goods and Services Tax and other price hikes, it could no longer stay silent and watch the people suffer due to the rising cost of living.

"We are not asking for the abolishment of all and sundry, but Umno Youth wants to send this message to the party leadership and the government — enough! Stop the price hikes, no more increases," said Khairy, drawing an even stronger applause from delegates.

"Take the highway tolls, for example. It had to be increased lest the government pays RM500 million in compensation. As the Umno Youth chief, I reminded the cabinet about

the Barisan Nasional pledge.

"If toll prices need to be raised, spare the intercity highways, such as the North-South Expressway and the East Coast Expressway."

He also hoped the revenues generated from the government's "painful measures" would be rechannelled to the people.

"In the next two years, because of the savings that we have made through GST, subsidy rationalisation, increase in tariffs, fares, toll and others, Umno Youth wants to hear only good news that will put the people at ease."

Khairy, in the same breath, urged the government to consider providing special discounts for youths who took public transport regularly.

"When highway tolls increase, we ask the young to take public transport. Now, KTM, ERL and other transportation fares have gone up. What other choices do the people have? Ask them to travel by foot?" he asked.