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PM chooses to take the high road

Detractors offered hand of reconciliation in line with Islamic teachings

DATUK Seri Najib Tun Razak has proffered his hand in reconciliation to his detractors, saying that based on the teachings of Islam, he chose to be magnanimous.

"I choose to open the door and window of my heart. I am extending my hand in the spirit of brotherhood (*silaturrahim*) to everyone to return to Umno's fold," said the party president in his winding-up speech at the Umno general assembly yesterday.

His declaration was followed by cheers and roar from the floor followed by a standing ovation from a majority of those in the Merdeka Hall of the Putra World Trade Centre.

Najib said if there were, however, still people who preferred to reject the offer and continue with the conflict, that meant the matter was no longer personal.

"They will be no longer opposing me as Najib Razak, the Umno presi-



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dent. They will be rejecting the starting point of a peaceful resolution and the recovery of our party.

"What is the point of us being enemies, *berpatah arang berkerat rotan* (going for broke) because the winner will become charcoal (*arang*) and the loser will turn to ashes (*abu*)," he said, quoting a Malay adage about a "lose-lose" situation.

Such a situation, added Najib, would not benefit anyone except for the enemies of Umno.

He said in life, there were hard times and good times, adding that if

life was always good, it would be boring, and if it was always hard, it would cause heartbreak.

But Najib vowed to continue upholding the struggle of Umno even as he faced slander and attacks.

"*Walau rentung dibakar fitnah, walau bercerai anggota dari badan, walau panah dan lembing bercacak dibadan, panji-panji Umno saya tegakkan* (Even if I am to be seared by slander, even if my body were to fall apart, even if my body were to be pierced by arrows and spears, I will continue to carry the flag of Umno)," he said.

He went on to quote another Malay idiom: "*Patah sayap bertongkat paruh, patah paruh bertongkat lutut* (If the wing is broken, the beak will support and if the beak is broken, the knee will support).

"But there shall be no retreat, no surrender," he pledged before end-

ing his speech to a standing ovation.

As he walked from the rostrum after his speech, Najib shook hands with everybody including Umno deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Earlier in his speech, Najib said this year's assembly had taken place under very unusual circumstances following the rally at the Sultan Sulaiman Club in Kampung Baru on Monday night.

Speaking at the club, Muhyiddin had called on Najib to take a short break to enable investigation into the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and the RM2.6bil donation to proceed without interference.

However, Najib said everything went smoothly because Umno holds fast to the Malay tradition and Islamic teaching where loyalty and respect are of utmost importance.

"We don't whack. We don't trash. We are taught to trust each other

and we must have the soul of Islam," he added.

Speaking at a press conference later, Najib said it was clear that the delegates wanted the bitterness within the party to end.

"They want any animosity and misunderstanding to end. The message is clear.

"They want us to make peace and resolve our differences."

"It is not me who asked (about reconciliation) but it is the general assembly's decision," said Najib.

During the debates, delegates at the Umno general assembly had indicated that they were ready to move forward and away from the crisis, which had plagued the party after the sacking of Muhyiddin and vice-president Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal from the Cabinet.

Watch the video
thestar.com.my/Videos