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Najib: Do not cross the line

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CONSULT: Umno president tells Dr Mahathir to use proper channels to settle disputes

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TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamad has been warned not to cross the line in his bid to bring the downfall of Umno.

Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Razak said he found it difficult to understand why the former party president was undermining the party.

"How can he not understand this after having been a leader for 22 years by trying to bring the party's downfall?"

"Don't cross the line. The party does not belong to anybody. It is our heritage," he said in his speech at the opening of the Tumpat Umno divisional meeting at SK Kubang Batang here yesterday.

He said differences in a party were a normal matter and there were ways to resolve them.

"In Islam, the Prophet encouraged us to hold *syura* (consultation) to thrash out disputes.

"It means that we sit down and discuss, not attack the leadership. That is the Islamic way.

"I do not say I am perfect and have no weaknesses. But please adopt a proper way to reprimand, in accordance with the party's constitution and Islamic principles."

The most important value in a leader was loyalty to the party, he added.

"Loyalty to the party president is part of being loyal to the party. If any party wants to bring down the party, he would attack the president first.

"Therefore, it is also the job of members to defend the president."

Najib said they must defend Umno and uphold its struggle and re-



Umno president and Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** listening to members taking a pledge of loyalty to the party and president at the **Kuala Terengganu Umno division delegates' meeting** yesterday. With him are **Kemaman member of parliament Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek** (left) and **Terengganu Menteri Besar Ahmad Razif Abdul Rahman** (third from right). Pic by Rozainah Zakaria



main loyal to the party.

Present were Kelantan Umno liaison chief Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, Umno information chief Tan Sri Annuar Musa, Kelantan police chief Datuk Dr Ab Rahman Ismail, as well as state Umno leaders and department heads.

Earlier, Najib said he wanted to hand over Umno and the government to his successor while they were strong.

He said he wished that the new leader would bring more success to the party and the country than him.

"That is why I appreciated Pak Lah (Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi). He

had told me (when he was leaving) to take the country to a higher level and he will be proud of it.

"I'll borrow this statement when I relinquish the post in the government and the party to my successor."

In taking a jab at Dr Mahathir, Najib said he would not interfere with the running of the new administration.

Later, Najib and his delegates visited ailing Umno veteran Tan Sri Hussein Ahmad at his home in Lemal, Pasir Mas. He spent 30 minutes there.

In **Kuala Terengganu**, Najib said he would make a decision on the state leadership after meeting all the Barisan Nasional state assemblymen.

"Leave the leadership question to me and I will ensure that Umno in Terengganu becomes stronger," he said at the opening of the Kuala Terengganu Umno division meeting.

Najib gave the assurance that he would listen to every view and advise accordingly.

"I will not make my own decision. It has to be through a consensus."

Najib reminded Umno members

to strengthen the party and to look after the people's interests if it wanted to win in the next general election.

"Terengganu is a unique state. It has the tendency to win and to lose. I would categorise Terengganu as a swing state.

"So, we have to ask ourselves if we want to win or lose. If BN wants to win, then act like you want to win.

"Even if the problems in Terengganu are considered a storm in a tea cup, but if unity is lost, anything can happen.

"It is better for us to come to our senses early before it is too late," he said, adding that the ship must only have one captain and this applied to the divisions, liaison committees and at the federal level.

He said only through teamwork can a ship sail smoothly.

"If you start making holes in a ship, we will all sink."

Najib said the conclusion was that each and everyone must love the party.

"Do not betray the party, or worst, form another party to bring down Umno," he said. **Additional reporting by Sharifah Mahsinah Abdullah**