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# Najib says election imminent, attacks Dr M, DAP

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**FORCEFUL:** He warns Malays of consequences of choosing opposition



KUALA LUMPUR

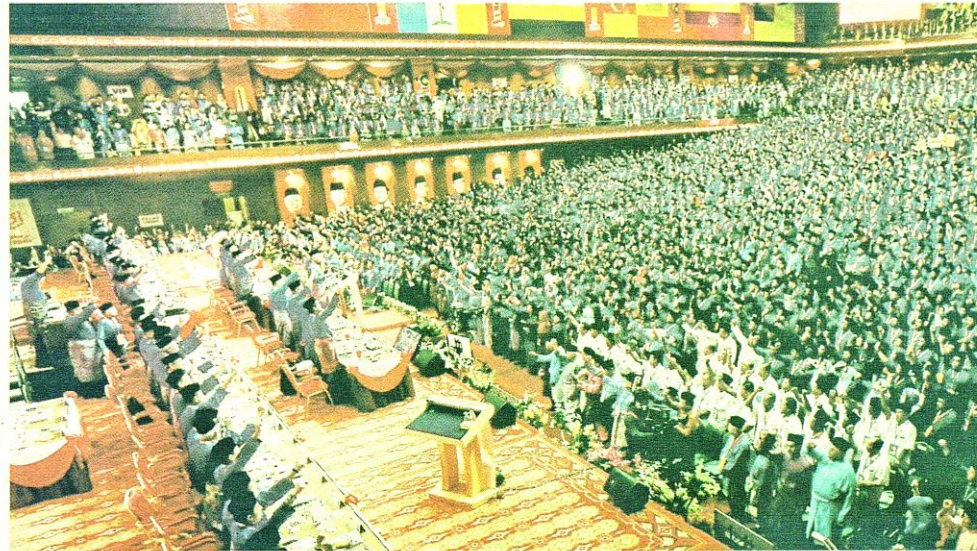
PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has sounded election war drums, telling party stalwarts in his Umno policy speech yesterday that the general election was imminent and that the Umno-led coalition must prevail.

In a forceful speech at the opening of the three-day annual party general assembly, the Umno president warned Malays of the consequences in the event Malaysia is ruled by the DAP-led opposition bloc.

He also accused his predecessor Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad of committing the "ultimate betrayal" for joining hands with the opposition and "foreign enemies", including currency speculator George Soros.

"This is a form of ultimate betrayal to Umno, the race and the nation," he said, recalling how Umno stood by Dr Mahathir for 22 years as prime minister and party leader.

In the 90-minute address amid a sea of blue in the packed Merdeka Hall at the Putra World Trade Centre here, he also thanked Pas for practising mature politics and standing by Umno, citing its MP's action in not joining in the opposition walk-out during his 2017 Budget speech and also for not participating in the



Umno president **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** and delegates shouting the party's slogan at the end of his speech at the Putra World Trade Centre in **Kuala Lumpur** yesterday. Pic by Ghazali Kori

Bersih 5 rally.

He said Umno backed the Pas-initiated private member's bill to enhance syariah courts' powers and said non-Muslims should not be unduly worried and there would not be any "dual" punishment under the amendment.

Najib painted a bleak scenario for Malays in the event Umno loses power in the 14th General Election (GE14), saying that the DAP-dominated opposition would dismantle decades of Bumiputera policies.

He said his Umno-led BN government has the track record and that only the current government could ensure the rights and interests of Muslims and non-Muslims were well protected.

Najib said DAP struggled for extreme liberalism and dangerous secular ideology, which means at least 10 Bumiputera and Muslim institutions such as UITM, Mara, Felda,

Risda, Felcra, Teraju and Tabung Haji could be dismantled or become extinct.

"Hence, if you delve into what I am saying today about the nightmares that await us, you (Malays and Bumiputeras) too will feel worried and afraid and cling on firmly to Umno," he said.

"Only Umno can defend and fight for the rights of our future generations," he said.

"Umno has fulfilled far more than its duty to its members, and has gone beyond in justifying its purpose to the people and the country, and no one will be left behind," Najib said.

"God willing, the battle torch is strong and will lead to a strong win for the Barisan Nasional in the 14th General Election, due to be called soon," he said in the address that drew a loud standing ovation.

Najib, consolidating his grip on

the party and looking more confident after a tumultuous assembly last year, spoke at length on party loyalty as a key factor in the run-up to GE14.

He also said he would continue to remain as a "mature leader" and said he would stay above the dirty tactics of his detractors.

Deputy Prime Minister and Umno's de facto No. 2 Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein came to Najib's defence on the party's warmer ties with Pas.

Zahid said the Umno-Pas collaboration went beyond political purposes and would go a long way in building a united Muslim community.

"If we are divided, how are we supposed to help others (Muslims)?" he said.

"It is not a question of political

party, but rather on how to counter-narrative the perception and global view on Islam that was propagated by the international media and social media," Hishammuddin said.

Wanita Umno chief Tan Sri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil said the party could now move on after a testing year. She was also elated after Najib paid a rare tribute in his speech to Wanita members and women.

"Finally, after all these years," she said in a text message to a reporter. After all, women voters hold sway in many constituencies.

Najib's speech showed he is very much in control of the party. He clearly drew the battle lines and hit the enemy hard.

He seemed to have put last year's black episode behind him. It is now about readying for the next election and delivering better results than in 2013.