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# Najib seeks to win over urban voters

'Umno and Barisan must look into new approaches to appeal to city folk'

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**JOHOR BARU:** Umno and Barisan Nasional need a new template to win over urban voters, whose expectation are different from the rural populace, says Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said it was time to seriously looked into the aspirations and wishes of those in the cities, who were more educated and had a different perceptible from the *kampung* folk.

He said Umno was not a political party merely for village people, it could also flourish in urban areas.

The Prime Minister said the party's success in Johor Baru, for example, proved that it continued to receive the people's support even though the city had undergone a rapid urbanisation process.

"I am attracted to the success of Umno in Johor Baru as it shows that we can attract support from urbanites.

"To do that, we need to practise inclusiveness. This means that we must take care of not only Umno people, but the rest of the people," he said when opening the Johor Baru Umno division meeting here yesterday.

In his speech, Najib also urged Johor Baru MP Tan Sri Shahrir Abdul Samad to reconsider his



**Thank you for coming:** Shahrir presenting a souvenir to Najib during the Johor Baru Umno division meeting at Holiday Villa hotel in Johor Baru. Looking on is Mohamed Khaled (right).

plans to retire from politics.

He said Umno needed principled leaders such as Shahrir to continue winning the seat.

"The Shahrir factor cannot be denied as even when he stood as a

independent candidate under a different symbol, he still won," he said.

"We can only urge and plead with him," he added.

Najib also urged Umno members

to continue working hard to ensure Johor remained a Barisan stronghold.

Shahrir has repeatedly said that he would not defend the parliamentary seat in the next

general election, preferring to pass the baton to a younger leader.

Shahrir was first elected Johor Baru MP in the 1978 general election but resign in 1988 when he refused to join Umno Baru, forcing a by-election.

He stood as an Independent and won.

He did not contest in the 1990 and 1995 general elections, but came back to the scene in 2004 and was elected Johor Baru MP again. He also won in the last general election.

Asked about Najib and Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin's request for him to stay on in politics, Shahrir said he took note of their views but refused further comment.

Later in the evening, Najib officially launched the MyWIN Academy located at Taman Tun Dr Ismail in Kuala Lumpur.

Chaired by Tan Sri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, the adviser on Women Entrepreneurs and Professional Development in the Prime Minister's Department, the academy offers programmes to train participants in entrepreneurship, leadership and professional development.

Najib announced the setting up of the MyWIN Academy Advisory Council which he will chair to further the agenda to empower women and increase their numbers in decision-making positions.