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'EX-PM SHOULD LEND SUPPORT'

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A former leader has forgotten his advice to Umno members to support successor, says Najib

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PAST leaders should support their successors to help steer the nation to a higher and successful level, as it does not happen overnight.

"Rome was not built in a day" and as the idiom goes, it takes several leaders and generations to develop a country, and this requires a long time," said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

The Umno president said a former leader, who served as prime minister for 22 years, seemed to have forgotten his own remarks urging Umno members to support his successor in order to ensure continuous improvement of the country.

"I still remember the person, in his speech in the past, reminding Umno members to support his successor when he steps down saying when he was the leader, they were the ones (the others) had supported him.

"Sadly, he failed to practise his own advice.

"If we look back, our country had six prime ministers, and each of them had been responsible in elevating the country to a certain stage or (make it) better, compared with their predecessor



Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Razak greeting people at the Pekan Umno division delegates' meeting yesterday. PIC BY MUHAMMAD ASYRAF SAWAL

(when the person took over).

"That is what I am doing now, which is known as 'added value'," Najib said during his winding-up speech at the Pekan Umno division delegates' meeting at the Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Convention hall here in Pahang yesterday.

In a veiled reference to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Najib said although the person might have forgotten about his remarks (to support successor) in the past, he (Najib) clearly remembers it.

Najib said when he succeeded the country's fifth prime minister, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the latter wanted him to do better than what he (Abdullah) had done and take the country to the next level.

"This is someone who is sincere and although he handed his po-

sition to me, he still has my respect as he is not selfish and thinks about the future of the country.

"I adopt a similar concept and will advise my successor to do the same to help drive the country forward."

Najib added that no leader could remain strong without the support and backing of the party and its members.

"The support is crucial to allow the leader to grow and become well respected with a strong influence as then no one can question his leadership," he said.

Earlier, in his opening speech at the meeting, Najib reminded delegates that one must have *roh* (spirit) to uphold the party's struggles, and not be swayed by anger and disappointment.

"If there is spirit in our strug-

gles, it is different. We don't fight for our struggles because we are angry at other people or disappointed.

"Some leaders, when they lose in Umno division polls, run off to establish another party, while others do the same when they fail to get party positions.

"(Dr Mahathir) held the highest party position (as Umno president) for 22 years, but he still betrayed Umno.

"This means there is no spirit (to fight for the party's struggles)," he said as the crowd responded affirmatively.

Page 1 pic: Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Razak handing over a certificate of appreciation to a veteran party member during the Pekan Umno division delegates' meeting yesterday.