

Umno Members Strengthening Resolve Ahead Of General Election
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 3 (Bernama) -- As the Umno General Assembly 2011 comes to a close, Umno delegates are returning home to prepare for the polls.

Otherwise, the reminder and admonition by Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak would only boil down to a rhetoric and would not become ammunition and a guidance for them.

There is no magic stick for the Barisan Nasional to register a big win in the 13th general election unless party members are united and loyal and willing to make a sacrifice.

Although the prime minister touched on various issues involving Umno's struggle, the dominant issue that drew the delegates' attention was the upcoming general election.

One of the most important ingredients in preparing for the election is unity at the branch, division or state levels as the strength at each level will bolster the party come what may.

The rebuke by Umno deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin that the Youth and Puteri wings had yet to strengthen their approaches to win the hearts of young voters should be given serious attention in harnessing the Umno and BN machinery.

Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's remarks that Umno had yet to fully regain the trust of the Malays following the split in Malay parties and the 12th general election tsunami should be taken seriously.

On "winnable candidates", former Terengganu menteri besar Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh's readiness to make way for another candidate should be emulated by the old guards.

The willingness of the Jertih assemblyman not to seek re-election would facilitate the prime minister in picking the best candidates for the polls.

Idris's decision should be respected by his supporters as it would ease the burden of the prime minister in choosing winnable candidates.

In fact, it could prevent party members and leaders from sabotaging BN candidates - one of the reasons why the coalition lost four states to the opposition in the last general election.

Besides, the term "Umno people", which had become a hotly debated topic after the president's policy speech on Thursday, should be clearly understood and not just pointlessly discussed.

Stressing on Umno people, Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Seri Mohamed Ali Rustam, said:

"For Umno people, they will attend all events or activities organised by Umno. However, there are some who think that just because they are Umno members, they don't have to attend it. This kind of attitude must be discarded," he said.

On the debate, certain political observers described the delegates as being less fiery, less focus and less cynical as they were only taking part in debates and made proposals to improve the party.

"For me, criticising and hitting out at other parties is no longer relevant. That's old politics. Debaters should change. Improve the party," said an editor of a local daily.

However, the delegates should also be commended for adhering to the instruction issued by party leadership to avoid raising issues that touch the sensitivities of other races.

A Pahang delegate, for example, had showed a high-level of courteousness when criticising the top leadership to avoid controversy as it would be difficult for Umno leaders to defend the individual concerned at the grassroots level.

Realising that some delegates and political observers had described his policy speech as inadequate to boost the spirit of Umno members, Najib used his winding up speech to raise the morale of Umno and BN members to get ready to go to the battle field.

He concluded that the general assembly, which was attended by 5,447 delegates, was successful in lifting the spirit and seeing the resurgence of Umno after the last general election.

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