

Embrace new realities or face 'tragedy', Najib tells Umno
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 1 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak warned Umno members today the party will face “tragedy” if it fails to embrace “new realities” in the political landscape.

In his speech, the Umno president told delegates at the party’s annual general assembly here, said to be Umno’s last before elections are called, that victory was a must and “there is no second place in a democracy”.

“We must become champions,” he said.

Najib (picture) also reminded delegates of 10 points of history, which he said had become “game changers” for the party’s survival.

“What is meant by game changer? Firstly, it is new realities.

“If Umno does not understand new realities in the political landscape, how can Umno and Barisan Nasional (BN) succeed?” he boomed to thousands at the Putra World Trade Centre in his policy speech.

He stressed the importance of using new media, saying it could determine the party’s success and failure.

“Like it or not, Umno has to master the new media. It could level the playing field or turn the battle lopsided,” he warned.

Najib also urged Umno to embrace the “new thinking” of voters today in order to attract support.

“Umno cannot behave, or at any point be seen as arrogant. If not, the people will hate us and distance themselves,” he said.

The Umno president also expounded on his transformation agenda, beginning with his Government Transformation Programme (GTP), which he said is to improve the public sector delivery system.

He said the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), New Economic Model (NEM) and Political Transformation Programme, all initiatives introduced under his administration, map out the final leg of the country’s journey towards becoming a high-income developed nation and provide a balance between “national security and individual freedom”.

Najib slammed the opposition for preaching democracy when many of its decision-makers were not elected to their party posts, taking an indirect swipe at PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and other Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders.

He mocked a recent pledge by the opposition to trim the civil service if it comes to power, asking: “Do they mean they want to sack more than 200,000 teachers? Who will teach our children? Not everyone can afford to send their children to private schools.”

"If that is not enough, (they) want to end the services of half the number of doctors and nurses when not all Malaysians can afford private hospital treatment. (They) want to stop half the army and police? Then, who would protect us and our families' security?" he said.

"This is the fate that will befall us if Umno loses power. Who will uphold the symbol of Islam? Who is capable of protecting the rights and agenda of the Malays? Who will continue to honour our Malay Rulers?

"Beat your chest, seek these answers."

Umno is currently holding what is likely to be its last general assembly before a general election expected early next year.

Najib is said to need a marked improvement from the last polls to retain his position as only a return of Barisan Nasional's (BN) customary two-thirds majority of Parliament can guarantee he remains in office. BN ceded 82 federal seats and five state governments to the opposition in the landmark March 2008 general election.

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