

Najib: Umno must understand what youths want
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 1 — Umno members need to understand the needs and attitudes of the younger generation if it wants to gain their support, Datuk Seri Najib Razak said today.

The party president said youths today had higher expectations and were more critical of the government, pointing out that the new generation of voters wanted more civil liberties.

“This generation are the children of the first generation of the New Economic Policy (NEP). They were born starting from the 1970s.

“This generation does not like to be told what to do, does not like to be told what’s right or wrong, and the thing they do not like the most is for us to bring up our past deeds,” said Najib (picture) in his presidential speech at the Umno general assembly here.

The prime minister said Umno needed to continuously “negotiate” with youths and needed to use all forms of available technology — the Internet, Twitter as well as tablets.

“Umno has to communicate using the language understood by the younger generation so that our party is understood,” he added.

Najib said this was the reason why he introduced civil rights reforms, which included allowing students above 18 to join political parties.

“Umno listens to the young and acknowledges them at all times, not just during elections,” he said.

Umno goes into 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 and 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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