

**Have dignity and shed protectionism, Najib tells Malays**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

SERDANG, Sept 29 — Malays should no longer “hide” behind government protection, instead succeed using their strengths and capabilities, Datuk Seri Najib Razak said tonight.

Addressing a crowd of over 10,000 Malays here tonight at the launch of the United Malay Economic Action Council (MTEM), the Prime Minister asked the community to remain “relevant” by adapting to an ever-changing global environment.

“If Malays want to be a dignified race, they cannot hide behind (government) protection, we have to be brave and have faith in ourselves...because we have our (own) advantages, our capabilities.

“If we depend on protection, it cannot guarantee survival,” Najib said.

The PM told the 63 NGOs present here to embrace the idea of the “21st century Malay” — one that is open-minded, competitive and has the strength and determination to succeed.

The modern Malay, according to Najib should be “flexible, fast, nimble” and not be “rigid” in adjusting to changes.

“This is the quality of the 21st century Malay, (we succeed) not because of government protection, but because of our abilities.

“When we talk about the 21st century Malay, indirectly this Malay must be different from the Malays of the previous centuries,” Najib said.

The PM told the Malay NGOs present they had a new role to play in shaping the “modern-day” Malay, and that they can bring forth demands of the community in a more effective manner.

“In the past, state actors had a bigger influence than non-state actors. But now with globalisation non-state actors, NGOs and individuals are far more influential today than before.

“It is time for Malay NGOs to move more aggressively, and be in the forefront for change,” the PM stressed.

Najib said that Malays needed to strike a balance between being fair to other races and also their own race.

Najib shakes hands as he arrived for the launch of the United Malays Economic Action Council in Serdang September 29 2011. — Picture by Choo Choy May

“We need to create new projects, so that people will not feel that we are taking away the rights of others,” he added.

The PM is backing MTEM to plan strategies for the community’s businessmen after repeated criticisms that Putrajaya has moved at “tortoise pace” to implement pro-Bumiputera

initiatives.

The 63 Malay groups includes the Malay Chambers of Commerce, whose national president will also chair the council.

The Malaysian Insider understands that among the 63 is the Malay Economic Consultative Council (Mapem), a powerful lobby group headed by Tan Sri Rozali Ismail, whose Puncak Niaga Holdings is said to be heavily involved with Umno especially in Selangor.

Najib has said there was a need to eventually do away with Bumiputera quotas but said the government must continue to support the community's best talent to ensure a more competitive business environment.

He pointed out that the New Economic Model (NEM) promotes affirmative action based more on meritocracy, saying "we must promote the right Bumiputera".

"Today 63 Malay NGOs are consolidated into one coalition to make them as a force to make changes to the Malay community and the country as a whole."

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