

'Beware danger from factions'
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KUALA LUMPUR: Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Razak will conduct a test to gauge Umno members' loyalty in the upcoming 13th general election.

He said this when party leaders and members attending the 65th Umno anniversary celebration vowed to remain loyal to the party even if not chosen to contest the election.

"I do not want to see those not picked as candidates sulking, stop working (for the party) and going abroad (instead of being with the party during the general election)," Najib told more than 3,000 people who attended the anniversary celebration last night.

Present were former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Najib's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor as well as Barisan Nasional leaders.

Najib, who is also the prime minister, warned of the danger of factions. If "factionalism" politics existed in Umno, the president said he did not see the point of celebrating the anniversary.

Najib also reminded members that the fate of Umno was in their hands.

He said he did not want Umno to share the fate of political parties in other countries that had lost their grip on the leadership.

"Umno's brand is still strong among the people and if we put the people first, God willing, we will continue to rule," he said, followed by three shouts of "Long live Umno".

Najib also asked those present whether the party had done enough to serve the people by working hard, going to the ground and remaining close to the people.

To this, he received a thunderous "No", with members saying that more could be done.

In Paris, Chok Suat Ling quotes Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin as saying Umno must take cognisance of the new political landscape and mindset, and continue to work closely with other BN component parties in addressing issues faced by the people.

The Umno deputy president said one issue which needed attention was the racial sentiments raised by some quarters of late.

Describing the development as worrying, he underscored the importance of avoiding such tendencies and creating a more harmonious relationship among the races.

"Education can play a role in this regard. But more than that is the role played by leaders in society.

"There needs to be a more open mind among political organisations as when racial

issues are raised, they can easily spark anger and concern.

"This has never been experienced before in the country," Muhyiddin said after presenting his keynote address at the 186th session of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation executive board meeting.

He stressed the importance of taking a moderate approach when addressing issues and in all circumstances.

"Other approaches might provoke discomfort, dissatisfaction and disturb the peace we now enjoy.

"We must learn from what has happened in other countries."

On Umno turning 65, he said the party was now more mature.

"But even then, the new generation of leaders in the party must comprehend the new political landscape if they want to get the support of all levels of society.

"These leaders must be more open-minded.

"I am speaking not just from the perspective of an Umno leader.

"Leaders of other political parties should also have a similar view."

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