

100,000-strong crowd shows unwavering support for party

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KUALA LUMPUR: Umno celebrated its 66th anniversary with a red wave of thousands of members as party president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak rallied them to prepare for the most crucial general election ever for the party.

The National Stadium in Bukit Jalil was filled to the rafters in a historic show of force which Najib said showed that Umno was still relevant and that support for the party had not diminished.

The mass gathering last night, also attended by Barisan Nasional component party leaders and representatives, was proof that the ruling party could command the numbers as well as gather in a peaceful and orderly manner.

The party president brought the crowd to their feet several times in what some described as election fever in the air, Najib fuelled the fervour by telling the 100,000 strong crowd: "With this kind of mood, I feel like seeking an audience with the King tomorrow."

When the crowd cheered, he asked them: "Are you ready? Can we win? What about tomorrow? June? Next year?"

The party president offered seven reasons why people should support Barisan in the election.

Among the reasons were that Barisan could be trusted and had delivered on its promises, only the coalition could promise that tomorrow would be better than today and it respected the Constitution, rule of law, sanctity of Islam, Malay rulers and the rights of all races.

"Most of all, Barisan can guarantee unity and harmony in the country.

"The crowd in the stadium is witness to the aspirations and trust of the Malays for Umno," he said.

Najib hit out at the organisers of Bersih and the chaos caused, adding that Umno members had gathered peacefully at the stadium because the party respected the law of the country.

"We do not need a large police task force. The police are looking cheerful and smiling. Why is it that we can gather at the stadium and they can't?"

Strength Umno members listening to party president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak during the 66th anniversary celebration at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur, yesterday. During the event, party leaders pledged to continue to champion the Malays and defend Islam.

"If they love the country and respect the law, then they should gather like we do," he said.

Najib said Bersih may have declined to hold the rally at a stadium because they had been afraid they might not get the numbers.

“It seems that we have more than them tonight,” he quipped,

He claimed the organisers wanted a clash to happen to get international media attention and portray the government in a bad light. He also slammed the violence that occurred during the rally.

Najib also criticised DAP for not renewing Tunku Abdul Aziz Ibrahim's senatorship following his criticisms against Bersih.

“They call themselves a democratic party but it seems like even a little criticism is not accepted.”

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