

Umno leaders rally for loyalty
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KUALA LUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has pledged to assist Umno in reinforcing the importance of putting the party first, placing aside self-interest, to ensure a two-thirds win in the general election.

"I am trying to help to get everyone to think of the party first and not the individual," he said after Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's closing speech at the party's general assembly here Saturday.

Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is also a former Umno president, said the party's spirit was stronger this time compared to a few months ago.

"I believe there is a big possibility we will obtain a comfortable win," he said.

Party vice-president Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal said Najib's closing speech had rejuvenated the spirit of party members before facing the general election.

"The most important part is that if one is selected as candidate, all party members must support that person," he said.

Kelantan Umno liaison chairman Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said the country would have to face many problems if the people gave the Opposition a chance to rule them.

"What is important now is our struggle, which has to be based on unity," he said.

Perlis Umno liaison committee chairman Datuk Seri Md Isa Sabu said members must follow whatever was decided by the party, including the choice of election candidates.

"This is the ethics we should practise. It should be followed so that we can gain victory," he said, adding that non-Malays also had faith in Umno.

Sabah Umno chief Datuk Seri Musa Aman said members should put aside their differences and stay united to face the Opposition.

"We must work closely and support one another and the party cannot afford those who sabotage it at the very last minute," he added.

Supreme council member Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri said the message must be brought down to the grassroots and not just discussed during the general assembly.

"No matter how strong our election machinery is, if there is internal sabotage at the very last minute, the party could still lose," he added.

Kedah Umno liaison committee deputy chairman Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir expressed confidence that Najib's call for unity would be heeded by the grassroots.

Malacca Umno information chief Datuk Idris Haron said the desire to ensure a resounding win for Barisan would be the key in translating Najib's message of putting the party first.

This could be achieved with Umno members supporting the winnable candidates selected to contest in the polls with no elements of sabotage.

Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin said it was the quality of party members which was more important than quantity.

"His speech was also a rallying call for the war - the general election. I agree that the Opposition is not that great but the only one who can defeat us is us," he said, adding that loyalty to the party was essential.

Felda chairman Tan Sri Isa Abdul Samad said that Umno leaders must be able to translate the "formulas" in the president's speech so it would be easily understandable by the grassroots.

"If the leaders understand the message and can translate it well, the rakyat will definitely choose Umno in the coming election," he said.

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