

Umno leaders laud Najib's speech
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KUALA LUMPUR: Umno leaders lauded Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's presidential speech at the party's general assembly Thursday, calling it a reminder to all to close ranks and get ready for the polls.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Zahid Hamidi said it was important for party members to heed the president's advice to put personal interests aside for the party's sake.

"The president has asked for the candidates and Umno leadership to be sincere when serving the people and put the party ahead of their personal interests.

"I think this is a very strong and important message which should be adhered to as we go down to the ground and prepare for the elections," said Zahid, who is also the Defence Minister.

Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal, who is also vice-president, said Najib's speech was a reminder to Umno members that it was up to them to ensure a victory for Barisan Nasional in the elections.

"His speech was advice to all members to be disciplined in the face of the elections. He reminded us that the fate of Barisan in the elections lies in the hands of Umno and its leadership."

He said Najib's remarks on Pakatan Rakyat's weaknesses were factual and would convince the people to elect only a tried-and-tested government.

"We have seen what the Prime Minister has done after taking over the country's leadership. His transformation initiatives, for example, have benefitted the poor and rich."

Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin said the president's message on change was clear.

"The president noted that we don't need to change the Government in order to see changes in Malaysia," he told reporters after the Umno president's policy speech.

He said the various national transformation programmes under Barisan' leadership was evident of the agenda of change by the Government.

"Change can come about through Barisan without the need to change the Government," he added.

He also said Najib also drew reference to the salient difference between what Barisan had to offer and that of the Opposition, which he said were mere promises.

"If the rakyat is influenced by the Opposition and they take over the government, it is akin to asking wolves to take care of the sheep," he said.

If this happened, Khairy said the Opposition would lead the nation and the rakyat to ruin.

Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil called Najib's speech "the mother of all speeches", saying it answered the key issues raised by the Opposition.

"He clearly explained what would happen to the country if the Opposition were to take over the government," she said.

She added that Najib's speech showed he was capable of leading the country and its people towards a better future.

"Najib today spoke not just as the son of a former prime minister and someone who has been mentored and guided by some of the country's greatest leaders.

"Today, he stood on his own and showed Malaysians that he is more than ready to lead this country," she said.

Puteri Umno chief Datuk Rosnah Abdul Rashid Shirlin noted the president's emphasis on Umno's successful cooperation with its Barisan partners.

"He noted that power sharing between Barisan's component parties is based on trust and brotherhood which the Opposition does not have," she said.

Former PKR leader and Bayan Baru independent MP Datuk Seri Zahrain Mohamed Hashim, who was invited to observe proceedings, noted Najib's message was not only for the country's Malay Muslim community but all Malaysians.

"For me, there is no choice. Umno and Barisan should be given the mandate to govern the country as we are aware that if Pakatan takes over, it will destroy the nation," he said.

Kedah Umno liaison committee deputy chairman Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir said Najib's message on closing ranks within the party and Barisan was crucial in light of the pending polls.

He cited the issue of the selection of candidate for the coming polls as an example where Barisan's interests came first.

"It does not matter who is chosen as candidate as we should only see the Barisan logo and not the party logo," he said.

Selangor Umno deputy chief Datuk Seri Noh Omar said the message was a reminder to all Umno members, irrespective of rank, to strife for victory in the coming polls.

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