

Umno is open to criticism, says Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 12 – Datuk Seri Najib Razak has promised constant reform from Umno and the government, saying tonight his party was “open to criticism”.

The Prime Minister’s pledge came hours after thousands of Malaysians thronged the capital city to air their disappointment with the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) government on various issues.

“Umno will always practise openness, to criticisms, and suggestions to improve the party,” Najib **(picture)** said when launching the party’s media appreciation dinner here.

“We don’t reject criticism, provided that it is positive and based on facts.”

The Umno president hoped that the media will serve as the bridge that will relay any aspirations, needs and criticism from the public towards Umno and government.

Najib admitted the media’s key role in determining the party’s victory in Election 2013.

“Any news coverage about Umno and its struggle will determine the people’s attitude and support towards us.

“Even if we implement good policies to achieve good objectives, if they are reported negatively then they will be received less positively by the people,” said the BN chairman.

Najib also urged for the media to report the news accurately and objectively, a complaint among Malaysians which has seen newspaper circulation dropping sharply in recent years.

The Himpunan Kebangkitan Rakyat earlier today was organised by both political leaders from PR and non-partisan members of various civil society groups as a final showcase of election issues before the 13th general election is called by June.

Umno also held an award show tonight which rewarded various publications and writers for showcasing the party in their headlines.

The award show was preceded by a speech by previous winner of Umno’s Political Journalism Award in 2011, Utusan’s assistant chief editor Datuk Zaini Hassan.

Zaini reminded the crowd that it is fine for a publication to be partisan as long as it practises the journalism ethics of reporting rationally, accurately and truthfully.

He commented that the majority of political blogs and alternative news outlets themselves are biased towards the opposition and openly ridicule the mainstream outlets.

“It is time for every parties to be ready for scoldings. We should accept them as advices, not accusations,” he added.

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