

Najib: Complete loyalty to the leaders our tradition

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KUALA LUMPUR: The tradition of Umno has been complete loyalty to the leaders and consensus in the name of unity, said Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

As such, he said, Umno members must unite behind party president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi because squabbles and differences were disruptive.

"That is the unity and loyalty needed to achieve our aspirations," he said.

He also said every prime minister had served and contributed in his respective era. Their work had been noted and placed in history.

"The contributions of our past leaders are invaluable. Our respect for them cannot be described merely by words.

"But there is great apprehension when the leaders we cherish begin to squabble. And the worry increases when the opposition tries to take advantage.

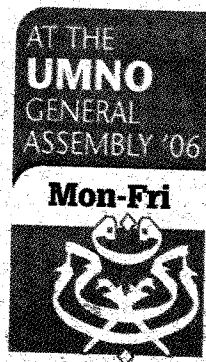
"Can we afford to have differences when we are only 13 years away from attaining our aspirations? Can we afford to have conflicts when our people are still weak in their own country? Quarrels will only lead to disunity," he said, in reference to the aims of Vision 2020.

Speaking at the joint opening of the Umno Youth, Wanita and Puteri meetings here last night, Najib devoted much of his speech to the need to strengthen the Malay mindset.

He said Umno would continue to promote the Malay agenda and accelerate the Malay mind in an effort to foster a generation of Malays with a culture of excellence.

He said negative attitudes reflecting laziness and half-hearted efforts must be eradicated from the Malay mind.

"In this struggle for the Malays, it must be firmly said that there is no time limit within which we must achieve our



targets. For as long as our goals are not achieved, we will continue the struggle, deploying every available resource, for the sake of our people. What we struggle for are our rights, without denying the rights of others."

The deputy prime minister said it was no longer enough for Malays to have basic degrees as the government wanted to see thousands more Malay lawyers, doctors, accountants, architects and engineers.

He said it was not enough to become a normal doctor, accountant or engineer but Malays must strive to become specialists, chartered accountants and engineers in new fields such as nano-technology.

Najib said the Malay mind must be sharpened by education, training and practice in methods of positive thinking, lateral thinking, pro-active thinking and purity of thought, through transformational leadership.

Citing Prophet Muhammad as an example, he explained that transformational leadership meant the ability of a leader to translate his mission and vision in a way that could be embraced by all his followers.

Umno, he added, would continue to struggle, using every available resource, for the sake of the Malays, without denying the rights of others.

"Recently, we heard of a skewed study which alleged

that the equity holdings of Bumiputeras stood at more than 45 per cent compared with actual figures of only 18.9 per cent. This 45 per cent figure is most unrealistic simply because of the inaccurate assessment and conclusion that the study makes.

"For example, the study considers government-linked companies like Petronas, Telekom Malaysia and Tenaga Nasional as Bumiputera-owned whereas in actual fact they are owned by the government," he said.

Najib explained that the government's 18.9 per cent figure was derived from the data of 600,000 companies, compared with only 1,000 public listed companies considered by that erroneous

study as their sample.

He said a newly-formed government agency would resuscitate Urban Development Authority's original functions to strengthen the position of urban Malays.

According to the Prime Minister's Department's Economic Planning Unit data for last year, commercial buildings and premises owned by Bumiputeras stand at only 11.7 per cent compared with 71 per cent owned by Chinese.

"It is based on this that the Yayasan Hartanah Bumiputera (Bumiputera Real Estate Foundation) was formed with an initial capital of RM2 billion to ensure that real estate that is beyond the reach of Malay individuals can be purchased by way of a collective

fund.

Najib also said there had been an increase in the number of cases where the sanctity of Islam was under assault, including actions by groups protesting constitutional provisions relating to Islam, namely Article 11 and Article 121(A) of the Federal Constitution.

He warned these irresponsible parties to extinguish the flames of incitement which could destroy the harmony of races and religions.

"Umno strongly opposes the formation of the so-called Interfaith Council which can threaten the harmony of this country.

"Umno will never waver from its position as defenders of Islam," he said.