

13/02/2003

Timing vital in naming polls candidates early, says Najib

PEKAN, Wed. - Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Razak today said that the party, should it accept a proposal to name early election candidates in Kelantan and Terengganu, would have to seriously consider choosing the right time to do so.

He said the move to name candidates early could do more damage than good if the timing was not right.

"The proposal needs to be weighed carefully ...timing is certainly a factor here," he said after witnessing a korban (sacrifice) ceremony of a camel in conjunction with Hari Raya Aidiladha at the Kampung Pulau Tambun mosque grounds here.

The Kelantan and Terengganu Umno liaison committees had proposed that election candidates for the two States be determined earlier.

Umno leaders there have suggested this to enable voters more time to get to know the candidates as well as for the grassroots to close ranks.

Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday that the party might accept the proposal but more details were needed for the matter to be considered, specifically on what would be the most appropriate time to name them.

Najib, who is also Defence Minister and MP for Pekan, said it would not be wise to name the candidates too early.

"A huge time gap may cause unnecessary politicking among the supporters of the candidates and those belonging to the dropped aspirants."

On the other hand, he said leaving it too late would allow little time for the candidates to familiarise themselves with their voters and vice-versa.