

No such thing as runner-up in GE, says Najib
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Najib Razak said victory in the general election was most important for Umno and BN because in politics, only victory would bring them meaning.

Hence, the prime minister and Umno president said, in a general election there was no such term as runner-up like in other contests which also offered prizes for the runner-up.

"In a general election, only becoming champion (winner) will have meaning for us... and we know that emerging as the runner-up means that we've lost in the elections.

"(And) we know the fate of the losing party," said Najib when opening the Selayang Umno division 23rd delegates' meeting at the Perangsang Templer Golf Club in Rawang today.

He said in today's situation and political landscape, what was important was to effect change and revitalisation because "if we stick to the old ways, we can win the old war, but winning the new war is not a certainty for us".

The prime minister said that in a parliamentary democracy system, no political party other than Umno and BN had performed brilliantly in terms of the success achieved.

BN record no guarantee of victory

Nevertheless, he said, Umno and BN were aware that past performance, no matter how awesome, would not guarantee that the party and coalition would continue to remain in power.

He said this was because the country's political landscape, its surrounding environment and society's thinking had changed much over the years, and he listed the information revolution and increasing level of education as among the factors.

"We cannot just be proud of our glorious history... when faced with threats we cannot be doing nothing, not wanting to bring change and to revitalise. If we are afraid of change, others will overcome us because they have effected change while we haven't... and we cannot just be proud of symbols and images when the substance is lacking."

In this context, Najib urged party members to create a winning alliance by forging relations and links with various levels and groups in society in their respective areas to ensure public support for the party.

"We need to have alliance with the poor, the middle-income, hawkers, traders, parent-teacher associations, youth bodies, organisations, and the Malays and non-Malays. All these alliances must be established.

"These are groups which will determine whether Umno wins in the coming general election," he said.

Numbers and perception crucial

Najib also reminded Umno members that to attain success in politics, they must pay attention to two things - numbers and perception.

Firstly, he said, those with the bigger number (of votes) would win, while secondly, politics was about perception, hence positive perception of the party must be built in the minds of the people.

"Remember these two things... build (good perception) and find the numbers... increase the supporters for us and reduce enemies. If they (opposition) condemn us, we counter the accusations the proper way

so that we will be better perceived (by the people)."

Najib also reiterated that he wanted winnable candidates from Umno and BN for the coming general election as the people would be closely assessing each candidate fielded.

"I know that in the old days we could win even if we put a songkok... others say a banana tree trunk would do. But now people want individuals with quality to represent and lead them," he said.

Najib also urged the Selayang Umno division to ensure the three state seats in the Selayang parliamentary constituency would go to BN in the coming general election.

The Selayang parliamentary constituency and the Rawang state seat are now under PKR, while the Kuang and Taman Templer seats are under BN.

- Bernama

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