

Muhyiddin to pick MPs for polls reform panel
Malaysiakini.com
September 20,2011

Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, as the BN chief parliamentary whip, will tomorrow choose five MPs to sit on the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) on electoral reform.

Announcing this today, de facto Law Minister Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz said racial and regional factors would be taken into consideration in the selection process.

Though the five MPs have already been "more or less" selected, the final confirmation - and possible announcement of their names - might only be made tomorrow.

Nazri said once the selection was confirmed, the speaker of the Dewan Rakyat would be notified of this for him to take steps to convene the first PSC meeting.

He said the remaining four seats on the PSC have been reserved, three for Pakatan Rakyat and one for an Independent MP.

Seen as an answer to Bersih 2.0 rally

"Regardless of whether the opposition wishes to participate in or boycott, the PSC will go on with its work," Nazri told reporters on the sidelines of an open house event of the Prime Minister's Department's law division in Putrajaya.

Should Pakatan decide against filling the three seats reserved for it, he said, it was not necessary that the seats be filled by BN MPs.

"This is a PSC. Our practice has always been to invite MPs from both sides. If there are rejections, it will not derail the committee," he said.

The Najib administration proposed the formation of the bipartisan PSC on Aug 15 in a move widely seen as an answer to public outcry over the flawed handling of the July 9 Bersih 2.0 rally for electoral reform.

Bersih on that day led more than 10,000 protesters in Kuala Lumpur, demanding electoral reforms in the biggest street demonstration seen in Malaysia since November 2007.

Nearly 1,700 protesters were arrested and there were scores of documented cases of protesters being assaulted. Prior to the event, the authorities detained people in possession of Bersih 2.0 T-shirts.

Scope of PSC still not known

The Najib administration has been widely criticised for the high-handedness of the police in the crackdown and its unwillingness to listen to suggestions to reform the electoral process.

The actual scope of the PSC is still not known, but it is clear that the Najib administration will not promise that the reforms will be in place before the next general election.

If an election is called before the PSC completes its job, the committee will be dissolved and its work will be futile.

Pakatan has been sceptical of the Najib administration's commitment towards meaningful reforms and wants a guarantee that the EC can implement the reforms before an election is called.

The coalition is expected to announce whether it will take part in the PSC sometime this month.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
<http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/176335>