

**Pakatan unable to challenge BN in S'wak: PM**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**Feb 22, 2010**

Opposition parties will not be able to challenge the Sarawak BN in the upcoming state election because voters in the state have their own yardsticks in choosing who to vote, said Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

Najib, who is also BN chairman, said he believed the results of the 2008 general election would not influence sentiments or support of voters to Sarawak BN component parties because people in the state were concerned more on local issues than national issues when choosing their candidates.

"One of their main concerns is rural development," he told reporters after launching a RM5.8 million rural electrification project at Rumah Radin, Lachau in Sri Aman today.

He said Sarawak BN was capable of continuing rural development in the state as it already had a proven track record in this area.

The component parties in Sarawak BN are Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS) and the Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party (SPDP).

In the 2006 state election, Sarawak BN won 62 seats in the 71-seat state assembly with the rest going to independents and candidates from the DAP, PKR and Parti Cinta Malaysia (PCM).

Asked whether Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud had discussed with him the date of the upcoming state election, Najib broke out in laughter and said, "Even if I discussed, I will never tell you."

On the merger plans between the PRS and SPDP which had been mooted by the leaders of the two parties since 2006 but has yet to be a reality, Najib said he left this in the hands of Sarawak BN.

"Whatever suits Sarawak BN will be fine for us at the national level," he said.

On PKR advisor Anwar Ibrahim's remarks that BN would face a similar fate (as in the 2008 general election) in the next GE even if he (Anwar) was in jail, Najib said they were just empty political rhetorics.

"I leave it to the people, won't engage in chest thumping, I will focus on my work to uplift Malaysians wherever they are," he added.

- *Bernama*

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/124869>