

PM: Early signs of restored faith in BN
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PHNOM PENH – Malaysians are recovering their faith in Barisan Nasional as the government starts to deliver on electoral promises and other pledges, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said Thursday.

The Prime Minister said there were early indications of a positive response from the people to government initiatives to meet their needs and expectations.

"As we begin to deliver on electoral promises and on stated commitments, our credibility is strengthened in the eyes of the public," he said in his keynote address at the 6th General Assembly of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties here.

"The final judgement of whether or not we have met the expectations of the people will only be known from the results of the next general election," he added.

Najib stressed the need to deliver and be seen to deliver as he drew lessons from the BN experience of the last several years when it lost considerable support and strived to regain the people's trust.

In the 2008 general election, he told the assembly, BN for the first time in history lost five states to the opposition and its two-thirds majority in Parliament.

Najib said that his first order of business when taking over the helm of the country in April 2009 was to put in place the "People First, Performance Now" commitment under the overarching 1Malaysia banner.

Since then, the BN government has launched 1Malaysia clinics to provide free medical assistance and services and 1Malaysia scholarships for excellent students regardless of race or religion, he added.

Najib said that various programmes to improve the living conditions of lower-income groups and eliminate poverty around the country were also introduced.

He said the government identified six National Key Results Areas to reduce crime, fight corruption, raise living standards of low-income households, improve rural basic infrastructure and enhance urban public transportation.

An Economic Transformation Programme was unveiled to establish a high income, sustainable and inclusive nation, and 12 National Key Economic Areas were identified, he added.

"The important thing to note here is that at practically every stage of preparing these economic initiatives which will have impact on their daily lives, members of the public were engaged in public labs and forums so as to enable us to truly gauge their expectations and deliver on their aspirations," he said.

Najib said that BN itself had undergone significant transformation and continued to re-invent itself to suit the changing times with the latest move involving the passing of

amendments that allowed for direct admission into the 13-party coalition.

Najib said that Umno, the backbone of the coalition, too passed historic amendments to its constitution last year to allow for greater participation of party members at all levels in voting the party's leadership.

"Of course it exposes us to greater scrutiny in terms of our work and it certainly puts party leaders including myself at substantial political risk, but it is our belief that our political support must be – and should be – conditional on our ability to perform well," the Umno president said.

"And by this mechanism, we will be judged by our own party members who can see for themselves whether we have earned our place as their leaders."

The Prime Minister said that a political party was delusional if it thought that its support base was permanent and unchanging and that it would forever be in power.

Najib said that many "legacy" political parties were plagued with such thinking, leading to internal bickering and power struggles within the party hierarchy.

"The end result is the loss of faith of the electorate and party grassroots which cause them to shift their support to alternative political forces that better serve their needs," he added.
- Bernama

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