

PM Leads Battle Cry For A BN Two-Thirds Majority
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KUCHING -- As the Sarawak state election enters its final lap, Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak rallied the state Barisan Nasional to return a two-thirds majority on Saturday.

Najib, who is the national BN chairman, urged voters to stick with the BN based on its track record and look forward to a brighter and more assured future with the close cooperation between the federal and state governments.

"I am confident that Barisan Nasional can achieve a two-thirds majority in this election although it is harder fought than the previous polls. Based on my observation and survey, the two-thirds majority can be obtained," said Najib here on Wednesday.

With two days left in the campaign trail, Najib said the BN must step up efforts to win urban seats where the BN had fielded high calibre candidates.

He asked urban voters to have faith in the BN as the government had already begun implementing transformation programmes and the 1Malaysia concept to ensure all races would be treated fairly.

The Prime Minister himself had gone on walkabouts in the urban areas of Kuching, Sibul and Miri to help woo the mostly Chinese voters.

The Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), the Chinese representative in the state BN, lost six seats to the DAP in 2006, and they are again fighting to win the hearts and minds of the Chinese electorate.

Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, who is also the BN deputy chairman, said sentiment for the "Blue Wave", the colour of BN, was growing. "I am convinced that with the people's support for the BN candidates, we can defend the two-thirds majority," he said at a luncheon with 900 community leaders within Miri city yesterday.

Also present were SUPP president Dr George Chan, who is also the BN candidate for Piasau, Lee Kim Shin (Senadin) and Andy Chia Chu Fatt (Pujut).

The BN assault here is shouldered by Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), SUPP, Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS) and Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party (SPDP).

Muhyiddin also called on the Chinese voters to continue to support the BN-SUPP candidates so that they could also play an important role in championing the interests of the community in the coming BN government.

Adenan Satem, a much respected political heavyweight in the state, is confident BN would prevail.

"The opposition appears to be putting up a strong challenge and (they) can win (several seats) but not enough to deny the BN a two-third majority," said the 67-year-old veteran who has spent half his lifetime in politics.

Adenan, who is defending the Tanjung Datu seat, said while the BN still had its core supporters, votes would be split among the opposition because they had failed to compromise on seats due to greed.

As for the opposition harping on the tenure of Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud, Adenan said that was no longer an issue as Taib himself had indicated that he would retire in a year or two.

Taib said yesterday he was confident the BN would gain more than the 48 seats required for the two-thirds majority because the BN still enjoyed support in the Bumiputera areas that form 80 per cent of the constituencies.

The BN held 63 seats in the 71-member state assembly and is contesting all seats again this time.

The bulk of the opposition is coming from Peninsula-based Parti Keadilan Rakyat and DAP which are fielding 49 and 15 candidates respectively while PAS, the third partner, is contesting five seats.

Homegrown Sarawak National Party is banking on a revival by standing in 26 seats after its talks with the PKR on seat distribution collapsed, while Parti Cinta Malaysia has six candidates.

The election has attracted a record 213 candidates including 41 independents.

(Bernama)

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