

Najib: Opposition Fails To Create Political Tsunami In Sarawak
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KUALA LUMPUR -- Najib Tun Razak said Barisan Nasional's (BN) convincing victory in the Sarawak state election meant that the opposition pact failed to create a political tsunami in the state.

The prime minister said what was being harped by the opposition, whether during their ceramah (talks) or through the alternative media, SMSes and other channels, the voters in general did not accept the tactics used by the opposition parties in trying to create a political tsunami in Sarawak.

"And I believe this is the reason, and ultimately, the voters in Sarawak were thinking rationally and not emotionally, that their future would only be safeguarded and guaranteed by supporting BN, and that the opposition parties were not better alternatives.

"This is the conclusion that we can make based on the big victory achieved by BN," Najib, who is also BN chairman, said at a press conference at Menara Dato' Onn, here, last night.

In the Sarawak state election on Saturday, BN won 55 of the 71 seats contested while the opposition won 15 and an independent candidate, one.

Of the 15 seats won by the opposition, DAP secured 12 while Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) won only three out of the 49 seats it contested.

Najib regarded BN's win which exceeded two-thirds majority as a strong mandate from the people for BN to continue to govern the large state.

"I wish to take this opportunity to thank all the voters in Sarawak for giving their continued support to BN," he said.

The prime minister said one of the reasons for BN's big victory in the state election was the close cooperation between the federal and state governments and between the central BN and Sarawak BN.

"I wish to thank Taib Mahmud as the Chief Minister and the state government because when both governments work together and are always in agreement, it means we give hope to the people that we can bring about a major change or transformation to Sarawak."

"I believe that one of the good things that has happened is that we have touched the imagination of the people when we promised a major transformation for the country and also for Sarawak through the Government Transformation Programme and Economic Transformation Programme, the momentum of which will be heightened," he said.

Najib said what was important now was for BN to maintain the people's support in the state election to be translated into victory in the 13th general election.

The prime minister also gave the assurance that the BN government would fulfil all its promises made to the people of Sarawak during the state election campaign so that they would not doubt its commitment.

"If we have given a commitment, we will honour that commitment as soon as possible," he said.

Asked on Taib's position, Najib believed the chief minister would keep his promise.

"It was a commitment made openly by him (Taib), but we will decide on the suitable time. What is important now is to ensure an orderly transition. That was what we had proposed to the voters in Sarawak," he said.

Najib said BN would also be using the experience in Sarawak to build on its capability, preparations and knowledge to come up with the most apt method to achieve victory in the next general election.

He said while BN appreciated the people's support, it should also take this opportunity to analyse the achievements including the bigger majorities in several constituencies, especially in the rural areas and outskirts of towns.

"This means our message to the rural voters has been accepted by them, but our defeat in some seats, which are mainly urban seats, calls for a thorough study to know the reasons so that we can use a more suitable approach to gain support from the urban voters."

Najib said in areas where BN had won, the success must be sustainable.

Asked on his advice for Sarawak BN to regain voters' support in areas it lost, the prime minister said BN must study the reasons and endeavour to effect change.

"It is clear that those who do not want change, will be rejected by the voters. In Sarawak, we cannot even take voters in the remote areas lightly. Their attitude towards us can change if they see what they don't like happening."

To another question, Najib said: "With open democracy and the existence of online media, it is getting more difficult to win elections with big majorities as seen in some countries of late...winning with a simple majority is already a big relief."

But in Sarawak, he said, BN had won with more than a two-thirds majority as it had expected.

"Hence today (Saturday), in the context of parliamentary democracy and using a global yardstick, this is actually an extraordinary and very encouraging achievement," he said.

(Bernama)

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