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'To transform is better than reform'

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KUCHING: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has dismissed the opposition's chances of scoring a big win in Sabah and Sarawak as the support for Barisan Nasional in the two states is very strong.

Najib said BN's support base in rural areas in the states was solid.

"I believe that the people in the rural areas are aware that their future lies with BN because we have a track record in developing rural areas," he said after the ground-breaking for the extension of SJK (C) Chung Hua No. 2 in Tabuan Jaya Baru, here, yesterday.

"I do not see any signs that Pakatan can win big in Sabah and Sarawak."

Najib, who visited the village of Semeba before going to the school, said BN had high hopes of doing well in mixed constituencies in Sarawak.

The BN chairman said the coalition was working hard to win over voters in the predominantly Chinese areas.

"For areas with a high percentage of Chinese voters, I notice that there is a slight improvement in accepting and giving support back to BN, although we must continue to work on greater engagement with them."

On PKR's deputy president Azmin Ali's call for students with National Higher Education Fund Corporation loans not to repay them, Najib said students had a commitment to repay the loans because the money belonged to the people.

"We are using the people's money to help them study.

"When they pay back, it will enable other students to go to uni-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak being greeted by the crowd at a **meet-the-people event** held at the community hall in **Kampung Semeba, Stampin**, yesterday. Pic by Azahan Rosli

versity without having to burden taxpayers."

He added that taxes were high in countries that provided free higher education.

"Free higher education equates to higher taxes. Very high, above 50 per cent.

"Is that the kind of model Pakatan wants for this country?"

On his arrival, Najib and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, were given a rousing welcome by parents of pupils from the 68-year-old school and BN supporters.

At another function at Dewan Masyarakat Baru Kampung Semeba in Stampin, Najib said voters must be able to make a wise evaluation by comparing the changes brought about by the government's transformation agenda with the reformation pledges made by the opposition.

Najib said transformation was better than reformation because the former would make Malaysia a developed nation by 2020, while the latter did not have a clear objective and was confined to making one individual the prime minister, "even if people are dragged into street demonstrations".

Najib and state BN leaders, including Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Alfred Jabu, were welcomed with the beating of Chinese drums.

In **Sibu**, Najib yesterday told the opposition to "stop acting" that they were a united bloc.

"Pakatan can't even 'pakat' (unite). Don't pretend that everything is fine and try to fool the people," he said to the rousing support of about 10,000 people at an open area in Jalan Kampung Datu here.

Najib said the opposition pact members always made promises and then contradicted themselves.

"There are two types of change. The radical change and the changes from within.

"For example, the existing government brings the change."

After all, he added, "Rome was not built overnight".

Najib said if the opposition were to lead the country, they would lead Malaysia to an economic disaster.