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Najib: Dr M's call to defeat Barisan unreasonable but expected

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LONDON: Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has described Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call to defeat Barisan Nasional in the upcoming by-elections as "unreasonable" (*tidak wajar*) but "expected".

He said Dr Mahathir had received so much good (*jasa*) from Barisan and Umno but was now asking people to reject Barisan.

"He has received so much through Barisan and Umno. Without BN and the party, he would not have been a minister or the prime minister for 22 years. He and his family have benefited from his position as prime minister - and this is due to the strength of Barisan and Umno.

"He is now asking people to reject the party that has been good to him.

"Does it make sense for us to stab the party, that has done so much for us, in the back?" said the Umno president and Barisan chairman at a press conference on Tuesday night with the Malaysian media.

On Sunday, Dr Mahathir called for a combined effort to defeat Barisan in the Sungai Besar and Kuala Kangsar by-elections on June 15.

He warned Opposition parties against splitting the anti-Barisan vote, citing the recent elections in Sarawak where DAP, PKR, PAS and Amanah were engaged in multi-cornered contests against Barisan.

On the candidates for the by-elections, Najib said the selection process was ongoing and they had to be selected carefully to ensure success.

"They must not only be acceptable to the party but also to the constituents," he said.

Najib was responding to a question on the possible candidates for the by-elections following the deaths of Sungai Besar MP and Plantation Industries and Commodities Deputy Minister Datuk Noriah Kasnon, and Kuala Kangsar MP Datuk Wan Mohammad Khair-il Anuar Wan Ahmad in a helicopter crash on May 5 in Sarawak.