

PM: More new faces will be fielded in next polls
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Holding on to the principle of winnable candidates, BN will be going all out to get back a two-thirds majority in the general election

BARISAN Nasional will field more new faces in the general election, its chairman Datuk Seri Najib Razak said yesterday.

Najib, who is also Umno president, said a number of elected candidates had willingly come forward to express their desire to bow out.

"Some have met me individually... I don't have to mention their names but they are willing to make way for new faces.

"It is normal for changes to happen in some places whenever there is an election, but this time there will be more new faces. It shows Umno is a dynamic party," he said after closing the Umno general assembly here.

On the fate of incumbents, Najib said they would be given a chance based on their performance.

"When we look at a candidate, we do not say he or she will be for one or two terms. We will hold on to the principle of winnable candidates."

Najib, who was in a jovial and upbeat mood throughout the packed press conference, said BN was prepared to face the general election.

He also said the coalition's readiness and strategy in facing the opposition this time around were more comprehensive.

Asked whether BN would be happy to win with just a simple majority or would go all out to get back two-thirds, which it lost in 2008, Najib said: "We want a strong government. This is what we aim for and two-thirds would just be ideal."

On BN's chances of winning back opposition-held states like Kedah, Penang and Selangor, Najib said BN was better prepared this time around.

"I do not want to underestimate the opposition as it will be a mistake to do that.

"However, our readiness and strategy are much, much better than usual," he said, adding that the Umno general assembly, which concluded yesterday, also showed that party members were reflecting renewed vigour.

"I could be biased, but the gathering was successful and historical.

"There is a new spirit among the delegates."

Najib added that BN would scrutinise every problem and issue that might be faced by voters, and clear their doubts to win them over.

Asked when he would announce the candidates' list, Najib smiled, saying that the timing needed to be just right.

"The timing has to be just right. It cannot be too early or too late.

"Previously, we encountered some difficulties when we announced it at the last minute. But if it is too early, there could also be other problems."

On Kinabatangan member of parliament Datuk Bung Mokhtar Radin's statement that BN politicians who were embroiled in controversy should quit, Najib said the coalition knew how to handle such issues.

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