

**Najib: GE can be anytime, not bound by electoral reforms panel**  
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KUALA LUMPUR (Aug 19, 2011): Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdi Razak said today that the next general election can be held anytime and is not bound by the works of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Electoral Reforms.

Najib said the government, however, would strive to implement any recommendation made by the committee before the coming election, reports Bernama.

"We will try; there must be something that can be done immediately," he told a news conference after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting at Menara Dato' Onn here today.

"What we can do immediately, we will do immediately," he added.

Meanwhile, Azril Annuar reports that Najib said the Barisan Nasional government hoped that Pakatan Rakyat (PR) members of Parliament will take up its offer to be a part of the committee.

Najib, who is Umno president, said it is a "sincere" offer and that Umno fully supports the committee. "This is a sincere offer on our part, because we need to have discussions across the aisle. There should be consensus (on the committee). We hope consensus across the board on the improvements we can do.

"However, this doesn't mean that this is an admission that there is major weakness on our electoral process. The (Umno) supreme council firmly states that democratic parliament has been Umno's principle for years.

"The credibility of our electoral process should not be questioned because we have proven that there is no manipulation in votes or voter registration," said Najib.

He also said that Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah Anwar Ibrahim's call that Opposition parties should head the committee cannot be considered as they do not have the majority, citing that this is the tradition of the Westminster Parliamentary system.

When asked what BN would do if the Opposition refused to come on board, Najib said: "We will cross the bridge once we get there."

Najib also announced that the latest figures for Umno membership nationwide is 3,227,444 and that Sabah has the biggest number with 483,013 members followed by Johor with 450,004 and Selangor with 428,525.

He also announced the sacking of Selayang Umno member Dayang Juliana Awang Thambi for contesting as an independent candidate under Parti Cinta Malaysia ticket during the Sarawak state elections recently.

Touching on the party's stance on the Selangor Islamic Affairs Department's raid on the Damansara Utama Methodist Church recently, Najib said it was a state issue and should be resolved at the state level.

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