

Nazri says new elections law will be considered after polls panel hearings

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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 17 — The parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reform will look into drafting a new law to ensure a free, fair and democratic process for the next general election, Minister in the Prime Minister Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz has said.

“The select committee will draft a report on electoral issues followed by discussions with the Election Commission (EC) to reach some conclusions. The conclusions will be then sent to the Attorney-General’s Chambers for review before being approved by the Cabinet, and finally tabled in Parliament to be made into law,” Sin Chew Daily quoted Nazri as saying today.

He said the Cabinet will discuss the formation of the committee today, including the term of reference, number of members and BN candidates who will be in it.

The Najib administration yesterday announced the formation of the PSC to examine the current electoral system.

Tens of thousands took to the streets to support Bersih’s July 9 rally for clean and fair elections in defiance of warnings of police action, which finally resulted in nearly 1,700 arrests, scores injured and one ex-soldier dead.

The government crackdown led to international criticism and a group of Malaysians even protested when Najib visited London, a rare experience for any Malaysian prime minister abroad.

Nazri (picture) also told the Chinese daily that the selection of the committee is expected to be during the third sitting of Parliament on October.

He said the new “election law” will need to go through a lengthy process, but the government hopes to implement it in time for the next general elections.

“The government must hold the general elections before March 2013, if the election falls during 2013, (this act) can of course come in handy, but I do not know when the general election is, only the prime minister knows,” he said.

The Padang Rengas MP said although Bersih 2.0 chief Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan had requested for public representatives, the committee will only include MPs.

He said during the Cabinet meeting on last Wednesday, the prime minister was urged to convene an emergency meeting to discuss parliamentary electoral system in particular the debate of “permanent residents becoming voters issue”, and therefore decided to establish a parliamentary select committee to resolve the election issue.

Nazri also said that the Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia is expected to serve as chairman, as for the opposition’s candidate, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim will make the decision.

The federal opposition coalition Pakatan Rakyat demanded yesterday that they chair the prime minister’s parliament PSC on electoral reforms to “prove good faith”.

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