

**Don't doubt sincerity for polls reforms, says Najib**  
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**By Boo Su-Lyn**

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 21 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak told sceptics today not to doubt the government's sincerity in improving the electoral process through a parliamentary select committee despite the possibility of snap polls.

The prime minister's remarks came after polls watchdog Bersih 2.0 said yesterday that Najib's bipartisan parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reform was pointless if general elections were to be held before the panel's recommendations were implemented.

"We are committed towards electoral reform," Najib told reporters today after launching the Kedai Rakyat 1 Malaysia thrift store in Bandar Tun Razak here.

"What I'm saying is that (the) election date is something that is our prerogative. Don't doubt our sincerity towards electoral reform," he added.

Some activists and Malaysians who joined the Bersih rally on July 9 for free and fair elections have dubbed the PSC an insincere public relations exercise by Najib.

The PM said last Friday that the timing of federal polls would not depend on the panel's proceedings.

When announcing the panel last Monday, Najib, however, was quoted by national newswire Bernama as saying: "This is so that we can reach a consensus in facing the next election without any suspicion about any manipulation by the government."

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders have said that the Najib administration's shifting position on the PSC indicated a growing rift between the prime minister and his party Umno.

Najib has said that some reforms could be implemented immediately, but refused today to specify them, saying: "We'll discuss at the parliamentary select committee."

The Umno president also stressed that forming the PSC did not mean that the federal government believes the present electoral system is rigged.

"It means that we want to make it even better, but don't doubt our sincerity," said Najib.

"I hope that our initiative to have this parliamentary select committee shows our sincerity," he added.

Najib announced the panel - which will be formed in October - some five weeks after Bersih 2.0 took to the streets of the capital city on July 9 to call for free and fair elections.

Nearly 50,000 people braved tear gas and water cannons at the rally despite a police lock down on the city.

A similar rally in November 2007 was credited for Barisan Nasional's (BN) poor showing in national polls held in March 2008, where the ruling coalition lost its customary two-thirds parliamentary majority and four more states.

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