

Najib says BN not just for rural folk
The Malaysian Insider
October 9, 2011
By Melissa Chi

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 9 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak called on Barisan Nasional (BN) to not only be a “rural party” and reach out to the middle class and intellectuals.

“We don’t want BN to be a party only supported by rural folk. We want the middle class and intellectual groups to support us as well.

“We want BN to be supported by all groups,” the prime minister said at the BN Federal Territory Information session here, attended by about 8,000 of its members.

Najib has announced a raft of reforms over the past few months, including a Malaysia Day address where he pledged to amend and repeal several security and press laws including the controversial Internal Security Act.

He has also set up a parliamentary select committee to look into improving the electoral system in what is seen as a major concession to electoral reform movement Bersih.

His administration had come under heavy fire for its clampdown on the Bersih 2.0 rally for electoral reform on July 9, which saw thousands of middle class Malaysians join the march in the capital.

Bersih has claimed some 50,000 people took part in the street demonstration but official police figures place the number closer to 6,000.

Police fired water cannon and tear gas to disperse the marches in chaotic scenes that resulted in over 1,500 people arrested, scores injured and the death of an ex-soldier.

Najib earlier highlighted the importance of only fielding “winnable candidates” in the next general election.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin had previously acknowledged that there may be dissatisfaction among Umno leaders who are not chosen or are dropped as candidates, but maintained that the party leadership will be able to keep things under control.

“If we play, we play to win,” Najib said today.

The Umno president said the ruling coalition should put forth a set of criteria for candidates in order to find the “winnable” individuals that will power them to victory in the next elections.

“If we have a ‘winnable candidates’, we have already studied them systematically and scientifically, not just based on hearsay,” he said.

Najib also stressed that it is just as important to not have backbiting within the party or

fighters for seats among component parties.

"The most important thing is that we don't create problems," he said

"This is the new BN formula."

The current administration's mandate does not expire until 2013 but Najib is understood to be considering an early general election to both secure his personal mandate and improve BN's existing hold on power.

BN suffered historic losses during Election 2008, when it ceded its traditional supermajority in Parliament as well as another four states to the fledgling Pakatan Rakyat pact.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2011 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/najib-says-bn-not-just-for-rural-folk/>