

Adjustments To Seat Allocation Formula Critical To BN
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By Mohd Noor Firdaus Mohd Azil

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 19 (Bernama) -- The decision of the Barisan Nasional (BN) to make adjustments to the formula on allocation of seats among the component parties is seen as critical to ensuring a big win for the coalition in the next general election, the 13th.

The need for the adjustments was announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who is the BN chairman.

Political analyst Dr Sivamurugan Pandian of Universiti Sains Malaysia said it was no secret that the 13th general election will be the most challenging in Malaysia's political history.

Hence, he said, it is important for the election machineries of the BN component parties to give their undivided support to the adjustments.

"This is where we will see the component parties making compromises and sacrifices which will lead to a win-win situation and minimise problems," he told Bernama.

Sivamurugan said he was convinced the adjustments to the formula would go beyond the elements of constituency and gender, age and profession of the candidates.

"They will look at the 222 parliamentary constituencies to determine which are the white, black and grey areas. Only after the constituencies have been assessed will the suitable candidates be shortlisted," he said.

Meanwhile, Umno veteran Tan Sri Sabbaruddin Chik felt that although certain parties would be disappointed with the new arrangement, it must be accepted in the spirit of teamwork and brotherhood because the spirit has been the key for unity among the BN component parties.

"BN component parties must be prepared to make sacrifices. There is a possibility that certain component parties will get fewer seats because that is the only way we can have winnable candidates.

"If the number remains the same, we might not get the best," said the former Umno secretary-general and four-term Temerloh MP.

Universiti Utara Malaysia Political and International Studies lecturer Md Shukri Shuib, on the other hand, said the BN should be more dynamic in character and its candidates must be credible enough to meet the demands of the people.

"Don't make the general election an arena to field cronies to safeguard the interests of one or two politicians, but pick candidates who are really sincere, understand the people and are able to work. That's what the people want.

"While the responsibility to provide such candidates may lie with the BN top leadership, the selected candidates must also be supported by the majority of the members," he said.

Another political analyst, Prof Dr Chin Yew Sin, said that logically, winnable candidates may

not necessarily come from among those holding a top post at party division level or even among the BN top leadership.

As such, Dr Chin, who is president of Oriental Strategy Research Centre, said it is possible that the candidates will be chosen from among members of non-governmental organisations, as long as they meet the criteria.

"I believe Najib has done much monitoring and, based on that, he will be able to identify the best candidates regardless of parties or organisations.

"If the potential candidates have the full support of the people, like it or not, they should be fielded," he said.

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