

**Najib: BN would have won Kelantan in 2004 if polls skewed**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**



Najib stressed today that his administration was fully committed to electoral reform. — file pic

KUALA LUMPUR, July 31 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak today shot down accusations that the country's electoral process was unfair, and said that if Barisan Nasional (BN) could manipulate results they would have won Kelantan in 2004.

The PAS-run Kelantan government, an opposition stronghold, suffered a near defeat during the 2004 general elections when PAS won the state with a slim majority of just three seats.

"If you think we (BN) can manipulate the ballot box, don't you think it's also possible we could have come up with three extra votes? If you say the Election Commission (EC) is not transparent, if you say we manipulate votes ... we can do it but we have not done so.

"There are fair elections in Malaysia, you should not doubt that," Najib said today during his speech to conclude the Malaysian Student Leaders Summit (MSLS) here.

The ruling BN coalition has garnered severe criticism over the way it handled the Bersih 2.0 rally, amid a long list of complaints over an unfair election process by Pakatan Rakyat (PR) and civil society groups. The international community, from Singapore to the UK, has criticised the government's handling of recent public dissent.

Najib stressed that his administration was fully committed to electoral reform in order to bring about an improvement to the current system.

"I'm committed to electoral reform. We will make sure there are no more phantom voters ... If the biometric system goes ahead, there will be no chance of phantom voters," he added.

The PM said he "refuted" allegations that there is no parliamentary democracy in Malaysia, before stressing that the only ones who determined the ruling government in Putrajaya was the electorate.

"There are no guarantees for anyone in the general elections. There is no way to fix the ballot box," Najib said.

Bersih estimates that 50,000 people showed up at the July 9 rally for free and fair elections despite efforts to prevent it from taking place while police have said the number was closer to 6,000.

The protest turned chaotic when police fired tear gas and water cannon at thousands of demonstrators, resulting in nearly 1,700 arrests, scores injured and the death of ex-soldier Baharuddin Ahmad, 59.

The government has promised to investigate allegations of police brutality while the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) will hold a separate public inquiry into police conduct during the rally.

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