

Umno needs to convince sceptical public, says Rafidah Aziz
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By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal

Rafidah said how well Umno will do depends on the ability of its grassroots leaders to "explain issues" to voters. — File pic

KUALA LUMPUR, March 2 — Umno's biggest hurdle in the next general election is to convince its detractors as well as an increasingly sceptical public that Barisan Nasional (BN) is the best choice to run the country, Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz said today.

"(The challenge is) trying to tell people, detractors, that this is not about winning elections; it's about governing the country, economy within global regional environment.

"You need a government that has experience, that has resilience, that has a good understanding of what needs to be done come any crisis from external sources," she told reporters here.

The former international trade and industry minister said although she was confident that Umno would win the next general election, the victory margin would depend on how hard the party's grassroots machinery worked to "explain issues" to voters.

"We hope for a better majority than 2008, targets can only be met with equal amount of work put in.

"So don't take polls just as winning seats and winning in Parliament. We're not interested about winning in Parliament; we are talking about forming a government that can carry the country forward towards Vision 2020."

Rafidah, a one-time Wanita Umno chief, stressed that the party has an impressive "track record" of governance, and that whatever mistakes the government has made will be rectified.

She said that Umno and BN were still the best choice for all Malaysians, and that what should matter to the public was a coalition that could govern the country "the best way possible."

"Our government must be given credit for staying the course, and for a good growth record.

"The biggest challenge is... the public," she reiterated.

Rafidah had previously cautioned her party leaders that the next general election cannot be won on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's "likeable" personality alone.

The prime minister's popularity, said the former international trade and industry minister, needed to be matched with a solid BN machinery to ensure a clear victory in the 13th general election.

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