

Strong Basis For BN's Display Of Confidence In Opposition-ruled States

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KUALA LUMPUR, March 21 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has a strong

basis in expressing confidence in Barisan Nasional's (BN) ability to recapture opposition-ruled states in the coming general election, analysts said.

For one thing, they said, the tide has been turning for sometime now in these states in favour of the BN owing to the prime minister's transformation initiatives.

For another, the government has proven its sincerity in helping the people by coming up with numerous initiatives designed to help them cope with difficulties, they said.

These, said Universiti Sains Malaysia's Prof Dr Ahmad Atory Hussain, played a deciding factor in shifting the people's support towards the BN.

"The people's support is returning to the BN owing to the government's holistic and fair policies to all, including to the minority groups," said the social science lecturer.

He said the "turun padang" (meeting the grassroots) initiatives by Najib and his deputy as well as by other BN leaders had brought government leaders close to the people, bringing along with them allocations which would directly benefit the masses.

Najib told over 20,000 people at a meet-the-people programme at Sekolah Menengah Putra Perdana Puchong, in Petaling Jaya on Sunday that the BN was confident of winning back the states currently under the opposition's rule based on the growing support for the national front.

Dr Ahmad Atory said the prime minister must have felt the political wind of change blowing in these states during his numerous "turun padang" programmes owing to his transformation programme and numerous assistance for the people.

These include the RM500 1Malaysia People's Aid, RM200 book vouchers for university students, RM100 for school students, and various other assistance reaching deep and far into the grassroots communities such as farmers and fishermen.

"I, too, am confident that the BN will be able to win in these states," Dr Ahmad Atory said, adding that these assistance was also a proof of the government's ability to manage the country's economy.

An Umno grassroots member in Shah Alam, Mohamed Hafez Hamid, 29, said he could see that the BN is now attracting the younger generation.

"The BN is reaching out to the people, solving problems and sharing ideas for the country's development," he said.

"For young people like me, what we want to listen to is a story about our country's future. There must be a concrete programme to bring the country forward. We no longer want to hear rhetoric and slanderous statements," he said.

Dr Ahmad Atory said the prime minister's to-the-field programme was in stark contrast to the one by opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"What do the people get when Datuk Seri Anwar comes to visit them? All they hear is profanity from him," he said, adding that the BN was capable of winning a two-thirds majority in the Dewan Rakyat.

Meanwhile, Prof Dr Jayum Jawan of Universiti Putra Malaysia said Najib's manifestation of confidence was an offensive strategy capable of putting a dent in the opposition's morale.

He said that Najib, as the Umno president and BN chairman, wants to see party leaders and members exuding similar determination and confidence and not let the opposition to continuously attack the coalition.

To Dr Ahmad Atory, the opposition was beginning to feel the heat.

"They have begun to launch psychological war by putting up banners as if tomorrow is election day," he said.

"If truth be told," he added, "people are actually shying away from the opposition."

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