

**Umno Able To Flex Political Muscle Again, Says Najib
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PASIR GUDANG, March 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has expressed his confidence that the Barisan Nasional (BN) would be able to overcome challenges to flex its political might again in the run up to the next general election.

He said history has shown that Umno and the BN had endured numerous tests in their struggle for survival.

Umno has suffered five major crises since its inception, starting with founder Onn Jaafar leaving the party in the lurch and forming Parti Negera, the 13th May bloodshed, the party being declared illegal, he added.

Najib said the party's resilience was further tested when Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's supporters held a protest and a reform movement following his dismissal in 1999 and the political tsunami in the 2008 general election culminated in the BN losing five states and failing to get a two-thirds majority.

"The history can teach how to face a crisis to enable us to flex our political might again," he said.

"The situation is similar to the situation in 1999 where we have to restore Umno and the BN. So, in such situation we have to do something to ensure our continuous survival as we have a big agenda for the country," he said.

Najib, who was accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, was speaking to reporters after launching the 1Malaysia Wanita BN Caring Expedition at the Pasir Gudang Municipal Stadium here, Saturday.

Expressing his confidence that the BN would be able to ride the political storm, Najib said the coalition was striving to strengthen its resilience, including its relationship with the people.

"As our strength depended on the people's confidence in us, we had to do what had to be done," he said.

Commenting on Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil's call for the BN to field more women candidates for state seats, Najib said BN candidates were not chosen based on gender.

He said instead, BN candidates would be chosen based on suitability for the constituencies.

"While thinking of nominating more women, we have to look at the situation at the micro level. We have to look at the suitability of candidates to ensure that those who are fielded can win," he said.

Asked whether menteri besar and chief ministers have been asked to submit names of eligible candidates for the coming general election, he said it was a party secret.

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