

**BN can't win GE by riding on Najib's popularity, says Rafidah**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
**February 12 , 2012**  
**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 12 — The next general election cannot be won on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's "likeable" personality alone, Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz has said.

The influential former Wanita Umno chief has cautioned that although she is "optimistic" that Barisan Nasional (BN) can win the upcoming polls, the coalition needed to work on its machinery to guarantee a good victory margin.

"I must tell you, our leader (Datuk Seri) Najib (Razak) is very well received. People like him. He is a likeable fellow. And I think he is very genuine about being close to the rakyat.

"But we don't go to elections based on one man's popularity. If it's possible to carry his name in all the 'kawasan', then we would win big. But it can't. It's not possible. And he cannot be everywhere to campaign," she said in an interview with the New Sunday Times today.

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 clean victory in the 13th GE.

"In order for us to get a good margin, we have to be on the ground working.

"But we're lucky we have that...people's attachment to Najib. But every division will have to work hard at it. We have to attend to their (the people's) needs," Rafidah (picture) told NST.

Despite several scandal involving senior Umno leaders plaguing his administration, Najib has remained likeable and popular as PM, according to several surveys.

According to a survey by International Islamic University (UIA), the Umno president's approval ratings among the Malay, Chinese and Indian communities rose from 35 per cent, 33 per cent, and 41 per cent respectively in 2008 to 59 per cent, 45 per cent and 62 per cent respectively last year.

A PKR internal poll last year found that Najib was seen as more popular than Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim but a more indecisive and a poorer communicator.

The prime minister was seen positively by 53 per cent of voters compared to 38 per cent who gave him the thumbs-down, according to the survey obtained by The Malaysian Insider.

Much of Najib's support came from the Malay community, where he was well-regarded by 71 per cent of those polled (net positive 46 points), compared to 34 per cent of Chinese voters (net negative 18 points).

Najib, who assumed the post of PM in 2009 has also gone out of his way to reach out to non-Malays, as seen by his recent visit to Batu Caves during the annual Thaipusam festival.

His Batu Caves visit culminated with an announcement of a RM2 million allocation to build a cultural centre in the area.

The incident however angered Perak Mufti Tan Sri Harussani Zakaria who on Friday expressed his dismay over the prime minister's decision to "sacrifice his faith" to attend Thaipusam celebrations at Batu Caves.

Harussani said even though he advised Najib every year not to join such events, the Barisan Nasional (BN) chief appeared not to place much importance on his faith or Islam.

The PM is expected to attend the annual Chingay parade celebrations in Johor Baru later tonight, another move seen to boost his appeal among non-Muslims.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/bn-cant-win-ge-by-riding-on-najibs-popularity-says-rafidah/>