

Najib apologises for BN's mistakes in move to cut opposition's strength
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BALING, March 3 – Datuk Seri Najib Razak apologised for Barisan Nasional's (BN) past mistakes today that cost its two-thirds parliamentary majority and four states in 2008, recognising the groundswell against the ruling coalition remains ahead of a general election that must be held by next year.

The prime minister said the BN would rectify the mistakes and make up by serving the people as best as it can.

The voters' rejection of the BN, like in Kedah, was in a way due to the mistakes made by the coalition, Najib (picture) said during a day-long visit to the state.

"I believe that we should not be arrogant. In a parliamentary democracy, we have to subject ourselves to the power of the people. We must have made mistakes for the people to have rejected us.

"We apologise for our past mistakes. The victors apologise, as do the losers," he said at a meet-the-people session at the Kuala Ketil public field near here, according to a Bernama Online report.

The BN chairman said the ruling coalition will learn from the mistakes and rise again.

The Malaysian Insider understands that the latest Umno surveys show that there could be a repeat of the Election 2008 results but with Pakatan Rakyat (PR) getting at least 87 federal seats, five more than in 2008.

Among the issues blighting BN's efforts to garner more support include a civil service pay revamp that has gone awry, the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) scandal involving a minister's family and the Lynas Corp rare earth refinery operations which has seen growing opposition to its plan to keep radioactive wastes in the country.

BN won 140 seats in the 222-seat Dewan Rakyat with the remainder going to PR but a series of defections have seen the opposition now having 76 seats. It also lost Perak to BN in 2009 after three PR lawmakers quit to be independents supporting the federal government.

PR now holds Kelantan, Kedah, Penang and Selangor but a brewing leadership crisis in Kedah could tilt the rice-bowl state back to BN in the next election.

Najib has yet to indicate when he will dissolve parliament for federal elections but he indicated his confidence today to win back Kedah.

"From the ruins of the BN in Kedah, we will rise and build a strong and sturdy 'palace'. That's our resolve. We resolve that we have learnt from our mistakes. We give the people an undertaking, that we will serve them to our best.

"Let the past remain just that. We promise a transformation for the people of Malaysia, and Kedah. The journey has begun," he said.

Najib said that only the BN can provide the people with a good future.

"Our plans are clear. We have a well-organised agenda, we have a roadmap, we have facts and figures. Sufficient statistics to drive change, to take the nation towards realisation of a progressive high-income country. This is unlike the Buku Jingga," he said, referring to PR's roadmap for implementation if they captured Putrajaya.

He said the government wanted to send the signal and provide a clear picture that it is close to bringing about a transformation that will give great benefits to the people.

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