

Najib admits support lowest among Chinese, BN mindset must change
The Malaysian Insider
April 09 , 2012
By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, April 9 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak admitted tonight that the “gargantuan task” of changing the mindset of his Barisan Nasional (BN) is needed to regain Chinese support, which is the lowest compared to other races here.

The prime minister asked Chinese voters on live national television to give his administration time to implement reforms as “the journey has already begun and we have accomplished much in the last three years” since he took power.

“If the people give us the mandate for the next five years, we can achieve much more. You can change systems and the law but changing people, the mindset, is a gargantuan task,” he said when asked why he was better accepted by Chinese than his BN colleagues.

He agreed with the hosts of ntv7’s Mandarin talk show “Chat Time With...” that support from Chinese was the lower “compared to Malays, Indians, Kadazans” but insisted that “the trend is that it is increasing.”

Najib took over as prime minister in April 2009 ostensibly to improve on the March 2008 election results where BN suffered its worst result ever, ceding its customary two-thirds supermajority in Parliament and five state governments.

Although the Pekan MP reversed a string of by-election defeats since then, results have shown that Chinese voters have swung further away from the ruling coalition.

He has increased efforts to win back Chinese voters recently, appearing on Chinese radio last month and intervening personally in key issues such as the Lynas rare earth plant in Kuantan and planned Mass Rapid Transit tunnelling works under Chinese-owned businesses in the capital.

The Umno president also denied that his party was “flexing its muscles too much” as it has “done so much now to make policies fairer and more inclusive.”

He cited the move towards merit-based government scholarships and needs-based welfare such as the Bantuan Rakyat 1 Malaysia RM500 cash handouts to households earning less than RM3,000 a month, as examples of how “Umno has embraced change.”

“Umno is supporting all these policies, so Umno itself has realised it has to change,” he said.

The BN chief said that because component parties such as MCA, MIC and Gerakan lost a large number of seats in Election 2008, they were perceived to be unable to provide a check-and-balance within the coalition of mostly race-based parties.

“All other component parties have very good access to me, and in Cabinet, we allow people to express views across the table before final decision. The process of consultation is pretty robust. In reality, whatever we decide must be supported by all component parties.” he said.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/najib-admits-support-lowest-among-chinese-bn-mindset-must-change/>