

Nazri: No need for BN-PR panel to monitor GE-13
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, March 29 — Putrajaya has rejected Lim Kit Siang's call to form a bipartisan commission to oversee the next general election, saying the Election Commission (EC) was capable enough of doing the job.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz (picture) told the Dewan Rakyat today that the EC was an independent body despite criticisms by the opposition, pointing out that the body had already successfully run 12 general elections and a total of 184 by-elections as of last year.

"The government does not plan to form another commission to ensure the coming polls are clean.

"This is because the EC already exists as an independent commission with integrity... its responsibility to conduct polls, whether general election or by-elections, has been carried out well and the governments formed so far after each poll are legitimate governments.

"Including when YB Bagan (the DAP's Lim Guan Eng) became the chief minister (of Penang)... that was also a legitimate government," he said.

But a dissatisfied Lim, who is the DAP's parliamentary leader, stood up to refute Nazri's claim, insisting that if the EC was truly free from political manipulation and the country's election process had always been clean and fair, the opposition would have won in past polls.

"YB (Nazri) mentioned the results of the 12th general election. If the system was fair, perhaps Barisan Nasional (BN) would have already fallen, the government changed.

"Is the prime minister or the government ready to announce that, in line with the (PM's) announcement that Malaysia will be the best democracy in the world, that the BN government will accept whatever decision in the coming polls?" he asked, amid heckles and shouts from BN backbenchers and former PKR MP N. Gobalakrishnan.

Nazri berated Lim for his "simplistic" assumption, pointing out that in Election 2008, the opposition had successfully trounced BN in five states.

"This is children speak. So the five states that the opposition won — that was free and fair. But the others than BN won — that was not?," he told the House.

He was responding to Lim's suggestion made earlier during his debate on the royal address that a bipartisan panel comprising members from both BN and Pakatan Rakyat (PR) be formed to ensure the coming 13th general election is free and fair.

Nazri also reminded the House today that Parliament had formed the select committee (PSC) to look into electoral reforms, saying that the panel was due to table its final report

next Monday.

He noted that the bipartisan nine-man panel, which includes three PR members, has already included in its discussions key issues such as suggestions to revamp the postal voting process and clean up the electoral roll.

The Malaysian Insider reported yesterday that the PSC had concluded its final round of discussions in a stand-off between members across the political divide.

According to a panel source, of the 22 issues included in the report, BN and PR members had disagreed on seven key issues, including calls to clean up the electoral roll.

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