

**BN Not Beholden To Any Party In Determining General Election Date - Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, June 22 (Bernama) -- The Barisan Nasional (BN) is not beholden to any political party or leader, including from the opposition in determining the date for the general election (GE), said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Najib, who is also BN chairman and Umno president, said having the GE during the Haj season was not something new as it had been done before but stressed that faith matters took precedence over other matters including elections.

"In our (Malaysia's) history, we have held a general election during the Haj season, The general election in 1986, if I am not mistaken.

"There were some committee members in my (Umno) division who were to be nominated to be election candidates but I was not able to contact them because they were in Mecca.

"When they came back, they had to accept the fact they could not be selected as candidates," he told a press conference after chairing a meeting of Umno's supreme council here Friday.

Also present were Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor.

He said this when asked to comment on the statement by PAS deputy president Mohamed Sabu who claimed that the Prime Minister would bear the sin if the GE was held during the Haj season.

Najib said the government did not prevent anybody from performing the Haj, and it was mandatory for them to perform the obligation if a resolution had been made to perform the pilgrimage.

Asked to comment on debates which were taking place more often lately between political leaders, Najib said it was not a comprehensive culture in the national political system but could be held if the need arose.

Asked if he would accept a call to debate with the opposition, Najib said: "I am not saying anything...what's important is that the people must have ample information in order to make a decision."

The Prime Minister said what was important was that the people had ample information to pick the party which was more qualified to administer the nation.

"We will allow political parties to broadcast their manifestos when the time comes and they are very active now with their daily ceramahs (political rallies)...and we also explain to the people, thus they get ample information to make their decision.

"Whether our agenda is better or the opposition's is better. Whether we have the capability to implement, fulfill (our promises) or the opposition is more convincing to the people. It is about winning over the people, not a question of debate," he said.

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