

Najib tells Chinese voters to stop 'confrontational culture'
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By Leslie Lau and Lydia Koh

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 20 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak has urged voters from the Chinese community to shun what he called the confrontational culture adopted since Election 2008 in making demands, in a Malaysia Day letter sent out to voters by Barisan Nasional's (BN) campaign machinery in Selangor.

The letter, written in Chinese, appeared targeted at younger voters who are Chinese-educated — with the demographic considered a major supporter of public protests and gatherings such as the last few Bersih rallies.

The Malaysia Day letter which BN sent to primarily Chinese-educated voters in Selangor. Many of those who received the letter were young Chinese voters.

Chinese voters are also seen as leaning heavily in favour of Pakatan Rakyat (PR) parties.

"After the March 2008 elections, we have found that the non-confrontational culture had vanished into thin air, to be replaced by a confrontational approach.

"Even if we acknowledge street demonstrations and openly debate sensitive subjects as a right of the public, should we not also consider whether a confrontational approach is the right way to solve problems and to push for reforms?" said Najib.

The letter sent by Selangor BN was signed by Najib as prime minister and state BN chairman.

In the letter, the PM did not cite examples of the confrontational approaches allegedly adopted by voters.

But the BN administration has been rocked in recent years by two major public rallies organised by the Bersih electoral reform movement.

Police action in violently clamping down on both rallies has hurt the BN government's popularity.

There is also a burgeoning environment movement that has been galvanised by rising opposition to the construction of a rare earth plant in Kuantan by Australian miner Lynas.

Recently, Chinese educationists have also organised several rallies urging the government to remove obstacles to the establishment of more Chinese independent schools.

But the increasing sense of dissent has also extended to other communities as well.

Recently, mainly Malay students have been organising demonstrations against what they considered oppressive student loans.

The Catholic Church is also still continuing its legal challenge against a ban by the government for it to use the word "Allah".

In his Chinese-language letter, Najib reminded the community that a "non-confrontational" culture may have its deficiencies, but said it had been useful in ensuring multiracial harmony.

The PM did not however spell out the nuts and bolts of the non-confrontational approach he wanted voters to take.

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