

**Don't pawn Malaysia's future to the opposition, PM tells Johor
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JOHOR BARU, Sept 22 — The country's future is too precious to be gambled away, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said today in his pre-polls pep talk to Umno delegates in the party's Johor fortress, adding that it was considered "taboo" surrender Putrajaya to the opposition.

The Umno president and country's sixth prime minister ordered his troops to harness their strength and energy to ensure Barisan Nasional (BN) scores its much-needed victory when the 13th general election is called.

"We cannot pawn off our futures, our futures are too precious. This (Johor) is where Umno was born, and it has served our nation.

"It would be 'pantang' (taboo) if we were to surrender this country to them (the opposition).

"God loves us when we stand united and Insha'Allah, God will give this victory to Umno and BN," Najib was quoted as saying in Bernama Online.

With polls nearing, Najib and BN are said to be in a tight race with political foes Pakatan Rakyat (PR) to win voter support.

Most predictions have BN taking the election but Najib badly needs a stronger mandate to ensure his policies can be rolled out in full after the polls, which must be called by April next year.

Former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said a few days ago that a stronger mandate was necessary to ensure Malaysia's prosperity, warning that a weak government would be too preoccupied with its political survival to govern well.

But Dr Mahathir also had a bleak prediction of BN's chances, saying it was likely that the ruling coalition would not recapture its coveted two-thirds parliamentary majority, which it lost in Election 2008.

Najib, however, appeared today to sound confident of BN's chances, even saying that PR has "zero credibility", according to Bernama Online.

Recalling the views raised recently by several political observers, Najib pointed out that his transformational policies had been praised.

"The opposition lacks credibility, they not only do not share a common symbol, their policies also differ with too many crises including their stand on the 'hudud' law," he was quoted as saying by the national news agency.

At a recent forum in a Petaling Jaya church, the political analysts had cast doubt on PR's readiness to rule Malaysia if it were to wrest control of Putrajaya in the coming election, saying there were unresolved issues blighting their chances.

Andrew Khoo, the Bar Council's Human Rights Committee chairman, pointed out that PR has yet to come up with a "shadow Cabinet" or a government-in-waiting, saying that this "restricts their credibility."

"Although they have a common policy in Buku Jingga... (the) inability or reluctance of PR to form a shadow Cabinet... has meant they are unable to articulate what their policy is going to be," he had said.

Khoo's fellow panellist, Bridget Welsh, had said that PR still needed to resolve its differences over issues like hudud, the Islamic penal code, adding that the experience of its leaders would be an issue.

The BN coalition has been the only federal government in Malaysia since the country was formed, having previously ruled as the Alliance Party.

Today, Najib echoed the pundits' views and pointed out that despite its highly-promoted "Road to Putrajaya" slogan, the federal opposition has yet to release its "shadow Cabinet".

"They (the opposition) must begin with a shadow Cabinet like in the democratic system of the Westminster model in Great Britain.

"In Malaysia where is it (the shadow Cabinet), it is because they are scared. Scared of giving (Lim) Kit Siang what (position), maybe finance minister, Karpal Singh for law and what to give Mat Sabu, women's minister," he was quoted as saying.

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