

**Najib demands full BN unity, admits 'impossible' to please all  
Malaysian Insider  
April 10, 2013  
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 10 — In a final push to inspire his team ahead of the May 5 polls, Datuk Seri Najib Razak demanded complete co-operation today from all Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders, pointing out it would be "impossible" to please everyone when drawing up BN's final candidates list.

The BN chairman, in what leaders later described as an "explosive" speech, repeated his message of unity to a hall of hundreds at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), reminding them that their most important goal is to form a strong government after Election 2013.

"I took the opportunity to tell them the few factors that we need to take into consideration in the division of seats and the identification of candidates, so that they understand that this is a complex and complicated process and we are unlikely to be able to fulfil the wishes of all or to satisfy every individual," Najib told a press conference here after the briefing.

"It is impossible for this to happen," he firmly added.

Najib said he will allow only 24 hours for those who fail to get selected to wallow in disappointment, but urged them to quickly return to BN's election war rooms once they are done.

Coming to the eleventh hour, Najib and his close associates have kept BN's candidates list a guessing game among even the pact's more senior leaders, believing that this strategy would help stop internal sabotage during the actual polls.

It was said that sabotage by disgruntled hopefuls who failed to make the cut had been one of the major contributing factors to BN's worst ever losses in the 2008 general election.

Since speculation on the coming polls date started last year, Najib has been driving home his message of unity and the importance of fielding "winnable" candidates to BN members nationwide, telling them not to take their eye off the main prize, which is retaining power in Putrajaya.

Faced with a stronger and bigger opposition force this time, Najib's team believes that selecting the most qualified and capable candidates would be the most important factor that would help drive BN's campaign through to the finishing line.

"It is important for us as party members to understand reality and accept that the selection of candidates is the process for the polls, but the key objective here is to form a government... a strong government at both national and state level," the BN chairman said.

"Becoming a candidate is not the objective... it is the process towards the final objective, which is to form a strong and viable government.

"So if we understand the purpose of why elections are held, then we would not allow our feelings and other considerations interfere our considerations for the party."

Najib outlined two key criteria in BN's candidate selection process: the individual's personal

qualification as a strong and sincere candidate, and whether the individual is accepted in the constituency he or she is vying for.

He explained that the leadership will be using the 2008 list as its "template" for selection but will take into consideration the results of the previous polls as well as other factors like the current demographics of the seats and the political landscape.

But those who lost in the last election may still be selected, Najib said, repeating the importance of the individual's qualifications in terms of how much work he or he has put in since Election 2008.

"So we are not saying that all those who lost cannot compete again," he said.

Najib added that even those who are "BN-friendly" individuals or direct members who do not belong to any of BN's component parties would be given opportunities to contest under the coalition's banner.

But these would only be a minority, the BN chairman said, pointing out that the number of seats to be contested in the coming election has not been increased.

"We will take consideration where we can... because in the current seats, we already have many candidate hopefuls," he pointed out.

Some 13.3 million voters, including 5,200 abroad, are eligible to cast their ballots in Election 2013 to elect lawmakers in 222 federal and 505 state seats in 12 states. Sarawak already held its state elections in 2011.

The Election Commission (EC) announced today that the 13th general election will be held on May 5, and nomination day falls on April 20, which will signal the start of formal electoral campaigns that will last 15 days.

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