

Najib Woos Young Voters In Latest Campaign Stop
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 12 (Bernama) -- In another display of his all-inclusive approach, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Friday reached out to thousands of youths and assured them they would have 'a future full of hope' under a Barisan Nasional (BN) government.

Leaving no stone unturned in his campaign for the 13th General Election, the prime minister spoke to a gathering of thousands, mostly youths in their early 20s, at the Bukit Jalil sports complex.

"There is no reason for youths to feel neglected, for the government has opened up to make the democratic process more open and liberal.

"Believe me, the government of the day is a government for young people," said Najib, in launching the 'Suara Generasiku' programme.

Young voters are a force in the May 5 polls. Over 2.3 million or 18 per cent of the electorate are newly-registered voters.

Najib had outlined in detail, in the BN manifesto on how the government would continue to achieve education excellence and provide a platform for youths to advance their creativity and realise their dreams.

While this was his first face-to-face with a young crowd since he dissolved the Dewan Rakyat on April 3, Najib has maintained his links with them through Twitter and Facebook, and sometimes watching 'live' soccer matches at popular gathering spots in the capital.

At last check, he has 1.4 million fans on Twitter and 1.56 million 'likes' on Facebook.

Meanwhile, Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar Friday said he would not be contesting in the polls, joining a chorus of stalwarts which include Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz, Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid, Datuk Seri Radzi Sheikh Ahmad and Tan Sri Ong Ka Ting.

After MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek announced Thursday that he would lead the party's campaign but not be contesting, the party's Wanita chief, Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen, indicated she too, was willing to step aside.

With nomination set for April 20, the BN is expected to unveil its candidates next week.

In SABAH, the coming polls will see a final battle between Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) president Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan and his younger sibling, Datuk Dr Jeffrey, once again for the Keningau parliamentary seat.

Pairin said the polls would be his swan song and he was out to defend Keningau and the Tambunan state seat - which are his strongholds - for the BN and the people of Sabah.

DAP chairman Karpal Singh meanwhile said the party would allow only one or two individuals to contest both parliamentary and state seats for strategic reasons, in line with the party's one-candidate-one-seat policy.

Currently, nine DAP leaders hold parliamentary and state seats, among them Lim Guan Eng, who is Penang chief minister, party national organising secretary Teresa Kok and Penang Deputy Chief Minister Prof P. Ramasamy.

Karpal said the DAP had yet to finish the job of picking candidates and it would likely last up to the eve of nomination on April 20.

In SARAWAK, a conflict over seats between DAP and PKR thwarted Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's plan to announce the party's candidates in the state Thursday night.

Anwar said PKR had endorsed candidates for 11 parliamentary seats but state party chairman Baru Bian, who will be standing in Limbang, said PKR wanted to contest at least 13 seats.

More opposition members have also deserted their parties to support the BN.

In Bachok, KELANTAN, 300 PAS members declared that they were joining UMNO with group leader Rosli Md Noor, saying that PAS had not fulfilled its promises after ruling the state for 23 years.

Another 60 PAS members in Perak also renounced the party to join the Pasir Salak UMNO division.

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