

BN must adapt to remain relevant, says Najib
Malaysian Insider
May 26, 2013

PEKAN, May 26 — The Barisan Nasional (BN) must adapt itself to remain relevant due to changes in the political landscape, Datuk Seri Najib Razak said today, amid opposition demands for changes in Malaysia's electoral process.

"Among the elements that will bring forth changes are urbanisation, better standards of living and access to information and communication technology.

"Nothing is constant. Whether it is quick or not, change will happen," the prime minister said at a thanksgiving event with members of Pekan BN's election machinery here today.

Najib sought his first mandate in the May 5 general elections but BN only won 133 out of the 222 federal seats, down from 140 in Election 2008. But his Umno bettered its performance to win more seats and also gained back Kedah.

The BN chairman pointed out that the ruling coalition had to adapt its strategy and change with the times.

"We cannot assume what we used before will be a suitable recipe for the future. We must be open, be pragmatic not dogmatic, solve problems and not deny them. Only if we act this way, Barisan will continue to be relevant," The Star news portal quoted him as saying.

Najib said with each election, the ruling party would face even tougher challenges.

"The fact that we are in power now does not mean it is a passport to our victory forever," he added.

We cannot assume what we used before will be a suitable recipe for the future. We must be open, be pragmatic not dogmatic, solve problems and not deny them. Only if we act this way, Barisan will continue to be relevant. — Najib Razak

Najib's party hardliners have urged a crackdown on dissent and blamed minority ethnic Chinese voters for deserting the ruling coalition, the Reuters news agency reported today. That has raised racial tensions in a country whose ethnic Malay majority dominates politics and enjoys special privileges to offset what its leaders see as its disadvantaged position compared to relatively wealthy ethnic Chinese.

Reformers have urged Najib to press ahead with social and economic reforms to blunt the opposition's appeal and address the concerns of discontented young and urban voters. That includes many ethnic Malays who voted for the opposition.

The hard liners appeared to gain ground last week when police used the colonial-era Sedition Act to detain three opposition politicians and activists and charged a student with inciting unrest.

The three arrested were later released after a court rejected the police remand order, but could still face charges.

Najib is under pressure from Umno conservatives such as Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who served as prime minister for 22 years, to show a tougher side ahead of a leadership election that could be held as early as August.

At least until then, planned reforms such as steps to widen Malaysia's tax base and reduce heavy food and fuel subsidies are likely to remain on hold.

Hakcipta © 2013 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/bn-must-adapt-to-remain-relevant-says-najib/>