

Every vote counts, do not waste it
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THINK WISELY: Najib calls on people not to gamble their children's future away

KUALA LUMPUR: THE waiting game ended yesterday with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's announcement on the dissolution of Parliament.

In a televised address to the nation at 11.30am, Najib called on the leaders of state governments to dissolve their respective legislative assemblies with immediate effect to allow polling for parliamentary and state seats to be carried out simultaneously.

(The Negri Sembilan assembly dissolved automatically on March 27 while Sarawak held its state election in 2011).

The announcement came exactly four years after Najib first took office as Malaysia's sixth prime minister. During the 12-minute address, Najib, decked in a dark lounge suit with red tie and flanked by his deputy, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, drew upon Malaysia's election history, calling on all parties involved to protect the country's democratic tradition and respect the will of the people.

"Political parties that have chosen to be part of the electoral process must be responsible. Do not doubt the people's sentiments towards the various parties -- this will allow certain groups to sow poisonous distrust and destroy belief in the integrity of the electoral process.

"History has proven that since independence, the governments elected in Malaysia are those that have succeeded in garnering the support and confidence of the majority."

He said throwing the country's electoral processes into question could jeopardise national security.

"Repent and be aware of the effects when such tactics have been used in other countries.

"The election process and results in those countries are no longer trusted, while the governments elected as a result of those tactics have been rejected by the people. The stability of the country is affected, the investors lose confidence, national prosperity declines and the people suffer."

Najib gave his assurance that the country's administration would continue smoothly under the caretaker government led by him.

He also called for a smooth and calm transition should there be any change in the government of the day, be it at the state or federal level.

"This is our pledge to uphold democratic principles, this is our aim in driving political transformation, this is our commitment to respect the voices and carry forward the interests of the people."

Najib also touched on Barisan Nasional's commitment to continue its national transformation policies, based on its 1Malaysia People First Performance Now slogan, should they be given a fresh mandate.

He cited the successes achieved by the government, economic, social and political transformation programmes to improve the lives of the people.

"The current administration is a responsible government that places the interests of the people above all else. We are a government that has always fulfilled its promises and protected the trust of the people.

"The proof of our commitment can be seen through our performance and track record over the past four years."

He advised the people to choose wisely, calling on them not to gamble their children's future away.

"Every vote counts -- do not waste it. Think and reflect (upon your choices) before making a decision. Your votes will decide not only the direction of the states and the country but also the fortunes of our children and grandchildren."

Najib had earlier been granted an audience with Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah to seek the king's consent to dissolve Parliament before chairing the final cabinet meeting for the just-expired parliamentary term. He also posed with ministers for a group photograph to mark the occasion.

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