

Independents face BN expulsion
New Straits Times
23 April 2013
By ROZIANA HAMSAWI AND EDDY OSMAN

IMMEDIATE ACTION: Letters to be issued to them tomorrow, says Najib

PEKAN: BARISAN Nasional (BN) will issue letters of expulsion tomorrow to members contesting as Independent candidates.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who is also BN chairman, said the coalition should not be faulted for the decision as the members had gone against the party's "clear" directive not to contest.

"If we have one or two (members) that we need to sacrifice, let it be. I would rather sacrifice them than sacrifice our beloved party," he said in his speech to Pekan BN members at his official residence here.

Najib said disciplinary matters must not be taken lightly while personal aspirations should not supercede the interests of the party.

"Our party has made it clear that those contesting as Independent candidates cannot remain as party members. We will take action on Monday to issue letters to expel these members."

Several BN members yesterday filed in their nominations as Independent candidates. Among them was former Agriculture and Agro-based Industries deputy minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shariff Omar, who filed his nomination to contest on an independent ticket in the Tasek Gelugor parliamentary seat in Penang yesterday. He was one of three BN members who had defied the coalition's directive.

A letter is also expected to be issued to Umno Wanita deputy chairman Datuk Kamalia Ibrahim, who had decided to run as an Independent candidate for the Kuala Kangsar parliamentary seat.

Yesterday, Najib expressed his confidence of BN winning the election based on the party's track record over the last four years.

"There is really no reason for the rakyat to be angry at or doubtful of BN. Our track record shows it all. We are the coalition which can bring Malaysia to greater heights."

Najib and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, met with BN members at Dewan Umno at 8.15am. Their children, Mohd Norashman and Nooryana Najwa, were also present to give their support. Najib's mother Tun Rahah Mohd Noah also accompanied him.

He later walked with his supporters to the nearby Sultan Ahmad Shah Convention Centre where he submitted his nomination forms at 9.04am while his rival, Fariz Musa from Pakatan Keadilan Rakyat (PKR), came to submit his at 9.25am.

This will be Najib's ninth election as a candidate here, a parliamentary seat he had won since 1976 and it would no doubt pose a herculean challenge for Fariz, a PKR supreme council member. Najib expressed his confidence of retaining the seat based on his track record and the locals' familiarity of him.

"I have a track record here and the locals are comfortable with me. I am confident of winning," he said stressing that his political life "started and will end in Pekan".

He first became a wakil rakyat after winning uncontested in a by-election in 1976, following the death of his father, second prime minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein.

Najib defended the seat in 2008 by beating PKR's Khairul Anuar Ahmad Zainudin with a record majority of 26,464 votes.

Fariz, 43, and a former teacher from Marang said he was confident of giving Najib "a tough fight".

"I may not be from Pekan but my wife is and my children go to school here. I know Pekan and its people very well," he said.

The parliamentary seat was initially expected to be a three-cornered fight but student Mohamed Bukhairy Sofian from Gerakan Mahasiswa PRU13 (GM13), who had as early as last year expressed his plan to contest, decided not to.

For the four state seats under the Pekan parliamentary seat, only Peramu Jaya will see a three-cornered fight between newcomer Datuk Sh Mohmed Puzi Sh Ali from BN, Abu Kassim Manaf from Pas and an independent candidate Syed Mohammad Faiz Syed Azemmant.

The Pulau Manis seat will be contested by BN's Khairudin Mahmud and PKR's Othman Bakar while the Bebar seat by Pekan Umno Youth committee member Fakhruddin Mohd Ariff and Mohd Jafri Ab Rashid from PKR.

BN's Abu Bakar Harun will contest the Chini seat against Sitarunisah Ab Kadir from PKR.

During his visit to the Tanjung Medang BN polling district operations centre after the nomination process, Najib cautioned the BN election machinery against complacency.

"Do not look down at the capability of the opposition's candidates although they may not be local people. On the other hand, BN must not be too comfortable with the good support it is getting."

Najib also called on constituents in the Bebar state seat to give their support to BN's newcomer Fakhruddin.

"I believe the newcomer will deliver the same kind of service and contribution as his predecessor."

After the Tanjung Medang visit, Najib also visited the Peramu Jaya and Jaya Gading centres.

Copyright © 2013 The New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Berhad.

Source: <http://www.nst.com.my/nation/general/independents-face-bn-expulsion-1.260572>