

GE13: Najib to drive home message of maintaining loyalty and unity

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak is expected to meet Barisan Nasional's elected representatives and division leaders tomorrow to drive home the message of maintaining loyalty and unity as the coalition finalises its candidate line-up.

The Barisan chairman is expected to have this "pep talk" with the representatives to close ranks and ensure unwavering support from all, including those who will be dropped.

Najib will use the meeting which will also be attended by division Wanita, Youth and Puteri chiefs as an opportunity to explain the coalition's *Journey of Hope* themed manifesto launched on Saturday.

High-level Barisan sources confirmed with *The Star* that a meeting has been scheduled to take place but declined to provide details.

Several Barisan representatives confirmed they have been invited to the meeting but were not informed of its agenda.

Alor Gajah MP Tan Sri Dr Fong Chan Onn said he would be attending the session.

"I think it is timely for the Prime Minister to hold this session to emphasise the importance of maintaining our unity and cohesion.

"Barisan component parties have a combined membership of up to five million.

"If each of us can get just one person to support us, we would have already won half the battle," he said.

Fong, who is retiring as an elected representative, advised his fellow Barisan incumbents to continue giving their full support to the coalition even if they are not chosen again.

"What is important is our party and ensuring that Najib secures a strong Barisan victory," he added.

Sabah Barisan secretary and outgoing Kota Belud MP Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan said even though Najib had spoken on the importance of loyalty and unity to Barisan members countless times, it was advice that one could never give enough.

"I have made a public pledge that even if I am not fielded again, I will neither sulk nor be disheartened.

"I will campaign for the chosen candidate as if I was fighting for the seat myself," he said.

Semerang state assemblyman Datuk Samsol Bari Jamali, from Johor, said he was informed of the meeting with the Barisan chairman two days ago.

He said that several *wakil rakyat* were bound to be dropped, adding that it should not come as a shock to them as being named or dropped was part of politics.

“Whether or not I will be re-nominated is beyond my control but I will work hard to ensure Barisan's victory in my constituency,” he said.

It was reported that Barisan will field almost 40% new faces among its candidates and that Najib and his deputy, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, had been meeting component party leaders to stress on the need for the coalition to transform with younger people.

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