

GE13: Najib - A strong government Barisan's main objective
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KUALA LUMPUR: Forming a strong and viable government should be the ultimate objective of all Barisan Nasional members, rather than being selected as a candidate, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said.

If they truly understand why general elections are held, they will not allow any other consideration or emotion to outweigh Barisan's interest, he said.

The Barisan chief drove home this message during a closed-door meeting yesterday.

The meeting was regarded as crucial as it was likely to be the last time for the coalition chairman to meet Barisan members before unveiling the candidates for the 222 parliamentary and 505 state seats.

"This is the main reason this gathering was held. I listed several factors which the leadership will consider in choosing candidates," Najib said at the end of the hour-long closed-door session.

Barisan elected representatives, component party leaders as well as state and division heads attended the meeting.

Najib said the criteria included how acceptable a candidate was for voters as well as his or her capability and track record.

A fair consideration was also given for the interest of all component parties.

"We also have different wings within our respective parties and we must take this into consideration in order for our decision to be as fair as possible," he added.

Najib also said the process of allocating seats and selecting candidates was complex and difficult and that it would be impossible to meet the request of all parties and individuals.

"It is important that, as party members, we understand this and accept the fact that this general election is not about who becomes candidates but for Barisan to form strong federal and state governments," he said.

Najib said he would essentially use the template of the 2008 election with some modification based on the election results that year.

"There will be one or two seats that will be swapped among component parties," said Najib, adding there was a possibility that several Barisan-friendly candidates would be fielded and would contest under the coalition's banner.

“We will take into consideration who we can accommodate but we are unable to accept all Barisan-friendly aspirants because there has not been any increase in the number of seats.

“As we know, there are already many waiting to fill the present seats,” he said.

During the 12th general election, Umno won 77 parliamentary seats followed by MCA (15), Parti Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu (14), Parti Rakyat Sarawak (6) and Sarawak United Peoples Party (5).

The MIC and the Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party each had four seats, while the United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (Upko) and Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) each won three.

The Gerakan holds two seats while Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah and the Liberal Democratic Party each took one seat.

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