Najib vows to do what’s best for the people

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Now that the hunt for candidates has moved closer to its final stage, with component parties being asked to submit names of prospective candidates, speculation is rife as to what the line-up would look like.

The list of candidates submitted by Umno’s 161 divisions to party headquarters, as required under its constitution, is being scrutinised.

Other component parties are expected to send their lists to BN headquarters by the end of the month.

Although Umno divisions did accede to the party’s quest for winnable candidates by proposing those not in the party hierarchy, some, according to Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, were not “outsiders”.

Some divisional leaders still want the last say on who gets to contest in the parliamentary and state seats in their areas. Grassroots gossip is full of tales of divisions trying to sneak in preferred candidates.

A division leader from a northern state, when confronted by a committee member on why he was calling for the nominees to be decided, insists that when he had quietly submitted his own list, insisted that a new list would be the division’s final list. After deliberations, the division ended up sending the names of all committee members for the seats in its area.

Another division chief in the south, without calling for a meeting to decide the nominees, was said to have submitted his name, along with two others who were not eligible to contest for a parliamentary seat.

Among other BN component parties, rumours are circulating that incumbents will not be re-nominated because they are not in the good books of their party leaders.

It is hard for BN component parties to forego their traditional veto on their candidates. They have always been given a free hand in selecting their candidates, but he does not mind because he cannot please everyone in his mission to do what is right for the people.

Ensuring adequate healthcare for poor

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people who get sick, but about the poor administration of Jamkesmas funds. We also often hear tales of hospitals that are reluctant to provide full healthcare services to the poor. Many Jamkesmas card holders are usually put at the bottom of operating waiting lists.

Indonesia needs more regulations and concrete action to protect the rights of low-income people to healthcare. Assigning more class III wards in hospitals for impoverised people could be one solution.

As House of Representatives lawmaker Erhlmi Amran put it, the Health Ministry should increase its ratio of beds for the poor to more than 50 per cent. Right now, only 10 per cent of hospital beds are reserved for low-income patients.

There are only 114,000 class III beds in 1,080 state hospitals across the country. Similarly, private hospitals should also welcome patients with Jamkesmas cards or regional health insurance cards. According to the Health Ministry, only 300 out of 700 private hospitals in Indonesia accept Jamkesmas cards.

With more than Rp7 trillion in its budget this year, the Health Ministry could do much more to ensure adequate health services for the poor. The public also needs to know that Jamkesmas cards are issued in an environment that ensures that the money goes to the right people.

Finally, it is the government’s duty to guarantee that every citizen in Indonesia, including the impoverished, have equal access to healthcare without discrimination.

There is no reason to delay treatment for the poor who need medical therapy.