

Reforms: Najib should follow Pakatan lead
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In light of the tonight's announcement by Premier Najib Abdul Razak, purportedly on reforms for the country, Pakatan MPs say he should follow their lead if he is serious about it.

"If the PM wants to make a meaningful change for the people of Malaysia, then he should take our suggestions," said Subang MP R Sivarasa (right).

He was speaking at the Pakatan Budget Preparation Committee press conference in Petaling Jaya today.

Sivarasa stressed that the only meaningful reforms would be the total repeal of preventive detention laws such as the Internal Security Act, Emergency Ordinance and the Dangerous Drugs Act.

Nothing short of this would be acceptable, he said.

If the PM was looking for reforms to media related laws, Sivarasa said, the premier should then dismantle the Sedition Act and Official Secrets Act as these draconian laws were fetters binding the media.

The PKR leader further said that as for the Printing Presses and Publication Act, the law - which can still be maintained as some of its clauses may still be relevant - should be amended to do away with the annual publication licence, which puts media organisations at the mercy of the home minister, who has discretionary and arbitrary powers over renewals.

Meanwhile, PAS' Kuala Selangor MP Dzulkefly Ahmad (left), who also joined Sivarasa at the press conference, expressed the opposition's "disappointment" with Najib's performance as finance minister thus far.

He said that it is time for a full-time finance minister to be appointed as we cannot have a PM that also moonlights as the finance minister.

"The job of being PM is burden enough for him to also want to be finance minister," said Dzulkefly.

The Kuala Selangor MP added that the Pakatan alternative budget would be announced on Oct 4, three days before Najib tables BN's budget in Parliament on Oct 7.

Guarantee of 20 percent petroleum royalties

Among matters Pakatan's budget will address is the guarantee of 20 percent petroleum royalties to all oil producing states and other recommendations of the opposition coalition's Buku Jingga which promises sweeping changes in the first 100 days of its rule, should Pakatan make it to Putrajaya.

Fellow committee member Liew Chin Tong (left), who is also Bukit Bendera MP, said their alternative budget would also outline ways to reduce the bureaucracy and clout of the Prime Minister's Department to save expenses and unlock the potential of other ministries.

The Pakatan alternative budget is an annual opposition agenda to portray how it can better serve Malaysia. However this year, instead of dissecting the government budget after it is tabled and make their recommendations, Pakatan aims to come up with its own budget beforehand.

This year also saw a special tripartite committee set up with all Pakatan parties involved, as opposed to individual parties speaking out on specific sections of the budget.

The oil royalty denied to the states and the bloated financing of the large-staffed Prime Minister's Department are some of the grouses often aired over the federal government budget.

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