

Muhyiddin praises PM for radical, bold reforms
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Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin has heaped praises on his boss for his "surprising" Merdeka Day announcements.

At a Merdeka-raya event in Nibong Tebal today, Muhyiddin described Najib Razak speech as "bold and courageous". He also said the premier's announcements were "unexpected and radical".

Muhyiddin (left) said some quarters are casting doubts on Najib's announcement by describing it as merely a political statements.

"I want to say that the decision is in line with the aspiration of the rakyat," he told the 5,000 crowd. "It is also in line with the changes and demands of our multi-racial citizenry."

However, Muhyiddin said the government was still committed to protecting nation's security as well as preserving peace and harmony among the various communities.

"We will not compromise on this," he said.

New paradigm

He added that as the country changes, so must the government in addressing the challenges facing the nation.

"The new paradigm manifests the courage of our leadership... our transformation programmes are ongoing," he stressed.

Muhyiddin was on a one-day working visit to Penang and scheduled to attend seven programmes in five parliamentary constituencies.

During his visit, he also dished out about RM13 million to various development projects.

Meanwhile, he cautioned certain quarters not to be prejudiced against Najib's speech on political reforms or deem it a "sweetener" ahead of the coming general election.

Muhyiddin said Najib (right) had seriously addressed the whole world about the reforms with the government receiving encouraging support following the announcements on Thursday night.

"Don't play-play (main-main), these are not sweeteners," he added, condemning those belittling Najib's efforts in seeking political change in the country.

"Do not think negatively about it... perhaps people find it unexpected or shocking to hear the announcements, but I am confident that the government has done it not for its own interest but for the rakyat.

"Whatever decision the government takes, it will benefit the people," he told reporters at a press conference in Sungai Acheh, after the Merdeka-Raya function.

Move not abruptly made

Asked to comment on whether there would indeed be reforms as the plan seems to be for the abolished ISA to be replaced by two new security laws, Muhyiddin justified the move as a non-compromising one to address acts of violence and organised crime.

He added that though such laws would emphasise security and the peace of the country, and not so much on human rights, he was confident that the people would still be able to express themselves despite their political differences.

On the reservations of pro-ISA groups over the repeal of the draconian law, Muhyiddin said that any protest would be "normal", saying that the government would go to the ground to explain the rationale behind the move to the people.

He added that the move was made not abruptly made but had been discussed since Najib assumed the premiership in 2009, after taking over from former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"But we need to explain and disseminate the right information to the people regarding the issue as some would not fully understand what the reforms would entail, while some quarters will misinterpret or politicise the matter," he said.

"We have initiated economic transformation and government transformation and now we are on to political transformation which is linked to the political situation, national security, human rights and freedom of speech. This means we have progressed to a level of maturity," he said.

On the actual implementation of the reforms, Muhyiddin said related agencies like the police force or the Attorney-General's Chambers must be strengthened so that the process can be completely properly.

He added that the new security related Acts to replace the ISA will be tabled in Parliament before the year's end, although de facto law minister Nazri Abdul Aziz said that it would be done next year.