

Minister: Dissent due to Pak Lah's 'hazy' reform plan
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There was internal opposition to former premier Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's reform plan because he was not explicit about this, claimed de facto Law Minister Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz.

Speaking to reporters in Putrajaya today, Nazri acknowledged that there had been "some" opposition to Abdullah's plans because those concerned were not clear about what this would involve.

"It is very important that the clear intentions of a prime minister must be made known. Otherwise, those in the (BN) component parties will not be able to discuss it," said Nazri, who had been de facto law minister in the Abdullah administration as well.

Nazri said this when asked to comment on Abdullah's warning to his successor Najib Abdul Razak that reform plans, such as abolishing the Internal Security Act 1960 (ISA), could be met with internal resistance.

Abdullah (right) said there are hardliners who prefer the status quo to employ laws to silence critics of the government.

His remarks came yesterday, four days after Najib announced that the ISA would be scrapped along with a other Emergency-era laws to widen the democratic space.

Nazri said that, unlike Abdullah, Najib had made his intentions clear about the ISA soon after taking office, and had given ample time for other stakeholders to deliberate the subject.

"He made it clear that his intention (was) to review the ISA. This can mean either amendment, abolition or repeal of the ISA.

"That more or less had alerted the various groups in the government as to the PM's intention. That probably helped, so it can prevent any obstacles by the BN members themselves."

BN parties objected, too

Asked which groups had objected, Nazri said they comprised government agencies, pressure groups, and some quarters within Umno and BN component parties.

"Even within the party, there are conservative views which we have to consider, so this must be the group that Abdullah is referring to," Nazri said at the Hari Raya 'open house' held at the law division of the Prime Minister Department.

In a special najib special address malaysia day 150911televised address on Sept 15, Najib had announced that the ISA would be scrapped while three Emergency declarations would be lifted.

Related laws like the Emergency Ordinance which allows detention without trial and that linked to the People's Volunteer Corps may be affected.

Najib also said laws relating to the right to public assembly will be reviewed, while the legal provision requiring annual renewal of publishing permits will be replaced with a one-off system. However, such permits can still be revoked.