

Najib needs the people's support to deliver reforms

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In order to defend PM's Najib Abdul Razak's recent announcement on repeal of ISA and amendments to several oppressive laws, the outspoken minister in PM's department, Nazri Abdul Aziz, has resorted to blaming (former prime minister Abdullah Badawi) Pak Lah for his hazy plan of reforms.

As a current minister, Nazri is duty bound to defend his boss but it is not necessary to put Pak Lah in a bad light. As an elder statesman, Pak Lah has every right to offer his opinions.

In fact, Pak Lah has remained almost fully retired after stepping down unlike the other ex-PM who is simply too keen to participate in public debates.

Put it rightly Pak Lah is a true gentleman, a true statesman, who has chosen to remain in elegant silence, unless it is absolutely necessary to speak up.

Pak Lah did not intend to offend the government of the day. He only offered his words of advice to PM Najib, to deal carefully with internal resistance to change.

Needless to say, the major part of Pak Lah's words was directed at the resistance engineered by right-wing leaders within Umno. Immediately after the March 8th political tsunami, Pak Lah had actually initiated a number of clear reforms to attract the middle ground but it was his own party that wanted to see him fail.

After that disastrous outcome of the March 8th 2008 general elections, there was a concerted and determined campaign to put in place a "formula of power transition" within Umno.

Minister Nazri should know for sure what happened during that time and what sort of action and inaction have been played out continuously to pull down Pak Lah sooner than later.

But Pak Lah had not done anything wrong. Indeed he commanded a simple parliamentary majority after that full-fledged electoral battle.

He had every right to stay on as PM with that mandate. The voters did not overthrow Pak Lah, they only gave him a lesser majority.

However, it was a different story within Umno itself. When Umno warlords have made up their minds, a PM finds it extremely difficult to carry on.

Therefore it is not relevant to ask whether there were any clear reforms or otherwise.

The scenario right now is about the same. PM Najib is treading the same path again; putting on more reforms that may offend these right-wing people.

Having taken the courage to repeal ISA, the PM looks set to push for harder reforms, to win over the middle-ground. But again internal politics in Umno can never be so friendly to reforms.

To fight with the right-wing players in his own party, PM Najib needs the support of the rakyat to carry on.

The average Malaysian must not dance to the rhythm of the opposition and must react proactively to the PM's promises.

At this point of the time, it is not necessary to be too skeptical about what is going to happen next.

The PM has made his promise, let's give him the time and space to implement them, otherwise Malaysian in general will again fall into the trap of right-wing players.

We must make it clear that middle-ground politics is good for the average Malaysian.

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