

PM: BN not afraid to admit its mistakes
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By Andrew Ong

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said BN was capable of changing itself and righting the wrong policies because it was sensitive to the wants of the people.

najib at mca youth agmSpeaking at the 58th MCA annual general assembly today, Najib (left) said that BN was not afraid of admitting its mistakes and making corrections.

“There is no point we say that ‘we are sorry to the people’ during the election. If we are aware that something is not right, the time is now to make the correction.

“We must have the courage to make the correction,” said Najib, adding that BN must be dynamic and fresh in thinking to remain relevant at all time.

The general tone of Najib’s speech appeared geared towards motivating BN component party members ahead of the general election, informing them of how the changes undertaken by his administration would provide a new impetus for the coalition.

Najib listed his administrative and economic transformation plans as among the changes which he has implemented, capping it off with the surprise announcement that preventive detention laws would be scraped.

He said that this list was the result of moves by the government to source feedback from the public and his administration’s policy towards inclusiveness and social justice.

“Only when we fear change... that is when you will be irrelevant as a political party. That is why I say, we cannot fear change. We must be ahead of the curve,” he said.

Pakatan’s litany of inconsistencies

In contrast, he claimed that the opposition Pakatan Rakyat’s clarion call for change was not backed with results.

mca agm 021011 left chua soi lek and najib“Instead, they show a litany on inconsistencies. One by one. They say they believe in open press and democracy. But at their press conference, only certain news organisations can attend,” he said.

This elicited chants of ‘betul’ (correct) from the floor.

Najib’s was alluding the recent press conference by Penang Chief Minister and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng where Umno-linked TV3 was not allowed to attend.

PKR is another Pakatan coalition member which consistently bars also Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia from covering its party events and press conferences.

Najib said that BN adopts a different attitude and even allowed ‘hostile’ media organisations to cover the Umno post-supreme council meeting press conference.

“I saw some faces (at the press conference). I know who they are. But I allow them to attend. But it shows

that they (Pakatan) are not practising what they preach,” he said.

Last Friday was the first time over a year where online news organisations were allowed to cover the press conference.

Wither shadow cabinet?

Najib also criticised Pakatan for claiming that their increased numbers had brought about a two-party system in Malaysia.

He said that a proper two-party system involves a shadow cabinet, which was never announced by Pakatan even after three years since the 2008 general elections.

He said that among the reasons why they failed to do so was because they were unable to agree on the portfolios.

NONE“What post will they give (PAS president Abdul) Hadi (Awang)? Law minister? Minister of religious affairs? If there are problems with Hadi, what about Mohamad Sabu? What post will they give him? Education minister? [laughter from floor] He is the deputy (PAS) president. You can't give him a small portfolio. It must be big.

“Lim Kit Siang? What shall we give him, the veteran (DAP) politician. Prime minister? [laughter from the floor] Deputy prime minister? Are they afraid?

“Anwar Ibrahim? What is his post? He talks about democracy but he is not an elected (PKR) president. I am an elected president of Umno [shouts of approval].

“Anwar Ibrahim is a de facto (leader). There is also a de jure. De facto is the husband. De jure is the wife while the vice-president is the daughter. What kind of party is this? You talk about democracy, but your party is family based,” he said mockingly.

He said that the opposition should thus stop adopting a high moral ground and stop preaching.

Striking 'the right balance'

Najib said that his administration aims to strike the right kind of balance between human rights, civil liberties, public order and security.

He said that his administration would not sacrifice human rights and civil liberties if it would spoil the nation's harmony.

Citing street demonstrations as an example, he said his administration was open to the idea but was wary of those who would use this opportunity to create chaos.

NONE“If we look at London - the cradle of democracy - you'd think it won't happen in Malaysia. There might be people who see a Chinese shop house and decide to burn it.

“Can you guarantee that won't happen? It is the responsibility of the government to ensure it doesn't happen. They go to Jalan Sultan, they see a flat screen television (in a shop) they might steal it.

“You want to show your dissent, we can provide space for you to show your dissent. We can provide stadiums or an open space where you can march until the cows come home,” he said.

The Najib administration had said it will amend Section 27 of the Police Act 1967 which is often used against street demonstrators.

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