

Najib: ISA abolished because it didn't help politically
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The ISA was abolished because it didn't help the BN-led government politically, said Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

"If you put someone in under ISA, it doesn't kill them politically. Instead, it enhances their political career," he told civil servants in Putrajaya today.

Without naming names, Najib gave the example of some ex-ISA detainees whose political profile he said skyrocketed after being detained.

He said this while delivering the keynote speech at a dialogue with civil servants organised by the Razak School of Government.

Similarly the PM also said that the Emergency Ordinance (EO) had to be done away with as technological improvements has rendered exile less then useful a deterrent to crime.

"In the old days, it was easy, if someone was bad, we just catch them and send them to places like Pasir Puteh, or maybe Jerantut.

"But nowadays, it is useless as no matter how far you send them, with their cellphones, they can still do their work (commit crime)."

As such he said, the Malaysian police must now change they way they work.

"Now police must train themselves how to look for evidence."

He stressed that instead of just catching suspects and chucking them into EO detention, police now provide evidence to charge them in court.

This is something which he wants the police to do well, as failures will make things look bad for the government in power.

The EO was a preventive law that allowed detention without trial used by police to hold known criminals with shaky evidence against them or for time-sensitive cases, though critics say this was misused by cops to just dump in suspects without bothering to even open investigations.

Facing a more competitive global environment

The challenge before the police, explained Najib, is one that is faced by all civil servants as they face a more competitive global environment and rising public expectations.

In the face of this he said that one important role for civil servants is in working to create wealth so that the extra bounty can then be distributed to the rakyat.

"This is why the socialist aproach does not work, they only talk of distributing, but we create wealth and then re-distribute."

He said that it was only the creation of new revenues via higher income tax revenues and from the Customs Department that allowed goodies like the BR1M and other payouts to the rakyat to take place.

The abolishment of the ISA, EO and redistribution of wealth to the rakyat via various handouts are cornerstones in the reforms touted by Najib, but critics said that the payments are just one-off goodies, while pointing to replacements laws they deem more draconian than the repealed security provisions.

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