

Najib responds to Dr M, promises balance

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has reiterated his promise to strike a balance between protecting individual human rights and public interest to reduce crime.

Najib said this in response to Dr Mahthir Mohamad's comments last Thursday in relation to the removal of preventative detention laws that the "price of freedom was more shootings".

"The government is studying the matter so that individual human rights will not be offended, on top of protecting public interest and public order," Najib said. "There must be a balance."

Asked if the government was bringing back preventive detention laws, Najib said no final decision had been made and that the government was split on whether preventive laws were acceptable.

"Not yet. We have not made any final decision, we want to see whether the existing laws are sufficient. At the moment we are having very intensive discussions.

"The only problem in preventive laws is that a crime has not been committed yet. How do you arrest somebody if that person has not committed a crime?

"If on a mere suspicion, is that sufficient ground for the basis of preventive laws?

"So that is the debate we are having at the present moment.

"The people must be aware we are concerned about bringing down the crime rate, that we are also concerned about possible abuses of human rights in the country," he said.

Balance between stability and fresh talent

Najib continued to stick to his 'balance' theme when asked to weigh in on proposals that the top two posts remain uncontested in the forthcoming Umno elections

"Well, Umno is a democratic party, so we have to take into account the feelings of the party members, if they have that view and want continuity and stability...

"At the same time, I say there must be a right balance between continuity and the need to bring in fresh talent at different levels," Najib added.

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