

Najib proves he is a failed reformist

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MP SPEAKS It is ridiculous and unacceptable that the Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Minister Abdul Rahman Dahlan has blamed unready Malaysians as the reason for the prime minister's U-turn on his promise to repeal the draconian and archaic Sedition Act.

The minister has said that the blame lies solely with the public for showing that it is not ready and therefore betrayed Najib's "noble" intention to abolish the Sedition Act 1948.

The plain fact is that Najib has bowed to the right wing and conservative elements in his own party.

Najib's U-turn on his 2011 promise has also proven that Umno is a party that cannot reform.

On Sept 19, 2011, former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who was conferred Universiti Malaysia Kelantan's first honorary doctorate, had said in his acceptance speech that Najib should expect hardliners in Barisan Nasional (BN) to resist his plans to repeal the Internal Security Act and other security laws because they want to maintain the old ways to silence critics.

Abdullah said his own efforts to implement reforms were "opposed not just by those outside but also those from within".

"There are hardliners who want to maintain the old system, controlling the flow of information and using laws to silence the public. Najib may face the same challenges I did before. The job of a reformist is not easy," he said.

Change is not easy and it requires political courage and commitment.

So it is sad that like Abdullah, Najib lacks the courage and has to bow to a party that cannot reform despite all his talks that Umno and BN must reform.

With the prime minister going back on his word, Malaysians are now wondering if he is still committed to his moderation concept.

Will there be more selective prosecutions under the Sedition Act soon or in future?

When opening the Umno Youth, Wanita and Puteri Convention three days ago, Deputy Umno President Muhyiddin Yassin talked about the trust deficit of young people against Umno.

Clearly, Umno has failed to address the reasons for such trust deficit issue and the U-turn on Sedition Act will only worsen the trust deficit against the party.

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