

Survey: Najib's popularity dips to 44pct
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's approval rating has dropped to 44 percent last month, the second lowest since he became prime minister six years ago.

His popularity slid one percentage point from 45 percent recorded in November and December last year. In October 2014, Najib's approval rating was 48 percent.

Najib's popularity plunged to its lowest in January last year when it registered 42 percent.

His highest approval rating was at 72 percent in May 2010.

According to Merdeka Centre, a poll carried out from Jan 21 to Jan 30 found that 46 percent of the respondents disapproved of the prime minister's performance.

The survey also discovered that 47 percent of voters felt that the country was "headed in the wrong direction" compared to 39 percent who felt it was "headed in the right direction".

The latest survey noted that 43 percent of the respondents, however, were either 'dissatisfied' or 'angry' with the performance of the government.

Negative sentiments were largely driven by economic factors such as concerns over the high cost of living as well as the impact of the upcoming implementation of the goods and services tax (GST).

"We attribute this to public dissatisfaction as likely arising from pressure due to the rising cost of living, depressed commodity prices in rural areas as well as concerns on increased polarisation along communal and sectarian lines in the country".

Public satisfaction same

Merdeka Centre further explained that other reasons driving negative perceptions about the country's direction included perceived poor administration and continued racial polarisation in society.

"Those who felt the country was on a positive track based their views on the prevailing sense of peace and security, favourable economic conditions and infrastructure development and continued welfare assistance from the government".

The Centre added public satisfaction with the government remained at the same level compared to the last survey released in October last year, whereby 38 percent reported that they were 'happy' with the government.

Although economic concerns remain the top issue among voters, with the latest being at 62 percent, this is lower compared to 71 percent in October 2014.

This was largely contributed by the drop in fuel prices and increased attention on the massive floods in East coast and other parts of Malaysia during December 2014.

A total of 1,008 registered voters comprising 60 percent Malay, 30 percent Chinese and 10 percent Indian were involved in the latest Merdeka Centre survey.

Respondents were interviewed by telephone. They were selected on the basis of random stratified sampling along ethnicity, gender and state of residence.

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