

No turning back, Najib tells critics

MalaysiaKini.com

May 21, 2015

By Nigel Aw

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today declared that he will not turn back in face of criticisms against his policies and administration.

"Even though recently we face all kinds of challenges and obstacles, the government and I will only choose one path - forward.

"We will never turn back," he declared after presenting the 11th Malaysia Plan (11MP) in Parliament.

Najib also made indirect reference to his fiercest critic Dr Mahathir Mohamad every time he touched on policies opposed by the former premier.

"When the government, with sincerity, decided to replace blanket subsidy with targeted subsidy in the form of Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia (BR1M), all of a sudden we are accused and criticised of this and that," he said, which courted knowing smiles from MPs.

Najib then broke into a popular Malay saying about how life was a struggle with ups and downs.

"Therefore I urge my loyal friends, if you are patient, if we remain steadfast in our belief with confidence in our hearts, if we leave it to God, eventually we will find out path to victory," he said.

As Najib ended his speech, he held up a copy of the 11MP, prompting his fellow MPs to get on their feet and do the same.

This prompted a noisy reaction from the opposition as he laughed gleefully at their reaction.

This is the second Malaysia Plan presented by Najib since becoming prime minister in 2009.

However, unlike the first plan he presented in 2010, Malaysia is facing tougher economic times amid a collapse in global oil price which has hurt the country's revenue, on top of its weak currency.

Furthermore, Najib, who is also the finance minister, is under siege for his handling of the finance ministry-owned 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) which has amassed a debt of RM42 billion.

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