

## **A major public relations debacle for Najib**

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**By Yoursay**

YOURSAY 'The public perception is that the PM has a lot to hide.'

### **PM no-show, Dr M steals the show**

**Vijay47:** Just when we think that PM Najib Razak could not do anything more stupid and self-destructive than what he has already ably achieved, he surprises us by showing that he can do much more than we believe he is capable of.

1MDB is a huge albatross around the prime minister's neck and like former PM Dr Mahathir Mohamad said, Najib "missed the opportunity to clear the air on 1MDB".

Najib, for heaven's sake, you are the prime minister of the country and yet you chickened out on a simple crucial occasion to explain to the public a problem that has been haunting you these last few months?

In none of your public meetings have you dared to take questions. And you are the prime minister? Just two days ago, you were crowing in Sarawak how popular you are with the people.

I hope you and your dream-mate realise that in cancelling the NGO event, you did much more harm to yourself than if you had not wanted it in the first place.

And once again the inspector-general of police (IGP) has revealed that in his own cunning fashion, he is a willing tool for Umno. Why did he suddenly order the cancellation of an event arranged at least a few days ago?

Was he, like Najib, dreaming a dream with his wife last night and suddenly he had this vision that the dialogue would not be very 'tenteram' (peaceful)? Since when in the history of Malaysia has a meeting between the prime minister and the public become a threat to peace?

Everybody knows that the meeting was called off because someone realised that a person of Najib's skills and intellect would never have been able to manage a public debate.

**Lionking:** It is so obvious that security cannot be the reason. Surely the security must have been set weeks ago once the venue is known and not just on the day of the talk.

This does not bode well for the PM and it is major public relations debacle. The perception is that the PM has a lot to hide and whatever he says, there is a credibility issue. This also says a lot about the IGP, who is perceived as not 'independent'.

To stop Mahathir from speaking must be probably one of the most stupid counter-action and will be detrimental to the PM, IGP and of course, the BN, particularly Umno.

**Odysseus:** This is just a forum where people come and speak their mind. Sometimes, the audience is allowed to ask questions. I can't comprehend how a forum can jeopardise 'ketenteraman awam'.

As an IGP, he should say he will send in police to safeguard the venue and prevent any untoward incident from happening. My guess is that the IGP is acting on instruction to save the PM from further embarrassment.

**Versey:** The PDRM in Sarawak and Pekan protected PM Najib when meeting thousands of supporters there, so what made IGP thinks that it's not safe for PM to attend his 'Nothing to hide' forum?

Those who attended the forum are civilised people. If PDRM could not safeguard a forum organised and attended by civilised people, what assurance could it give to its citizens that they are protected in their daily lives, more so with the threat of terrorist attacks?

The meeting was organised days before, there should be ample time for the IGP to get his people to take all the necessary security measures to safeguard the meeting.

**Mushiro:** This is a cheap attempt by the IGP to save Najib from answering questions in an open forum.

If Najib was sincere to clear himself, he should allow himself to be questioned in more such forums. But barring the media from today's forum is already a sign of it not being open.

**FairMind:** Why should a dialogue on transparency and inquiry on RM41 billion debt be a threat to national security?

On the contrary, it is to the benefit of every Malaysians. If there is a small commotion outside the hall, it is the police's job to contain it and ensure the dialogue progresses smoothly. There is absolutely no reason to stop any peaceful dialogue.

By stopping the dialogue only shows the unholy trinity of the PM, IGP and the attorney-general watching one another's back.

**Justine Gow:** Is this the defining moment in the conflict between the two? Would the PM resort to brute force to pull the former PM down from the podium?

It looks like Dr M is still formidable. I commented last night that he did not give a definite answer of attending, simply because it would be likely that that someone would not turn up at the last minute with some excuses if it was known that Dr M would be attending.

I was thinking of excuses like "down with virus" or "food poisoning", but I did not think of

"security issues", which is just as convenient as saying "technical issues" whenever anything does not work.

**Kee Thuan Chye:** Please don't get carried away and start lionising Mahathir. What he's doing does not constitute redemption of his past sins. He must still be held accountable for them. Don't let him get off the hook so easily.

That's what he wants us to do, but we must not play into his hands. He is still the man who did a lot of damage to the country and its institutions. Let us never forget that.

**Tholu:** On Thursday in Kuching, Najib told his audience that he and his wife would sleep soundly that night - on the same pillow and dreaming the same dream.

But this morning when he woke up to the shocking news that Mahathir is already waiting for his arrival to the forum, his dreams turned into his worst nightmare and he started having cold sweats.

He called the Ketua Tweet Negara and instructed him to cancel the forum, and our IGP, true to his reputation, slavishly obeyed Najib's commands and tweeted to his officers to cancel the forum on the pretext of safeguarding public safety and national harmony.

Public safety and national harmony? Is the forum a gathering of a million armed people preparing to march to Putrajaya to violently overthrow the government?

**Doc:** It looks like Najib will not be sleeping soundly tonight on the same pillow with wife Rosmah Mansor.