

PM: Dr M's RM10m polls spending 'irrational'

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Prime Minister Najib Razak has rubbished the remark by former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad that during his rule, only RM10 million had been used for each national polls campaign.

Najib said he had always defended Mahathir but the former PM's statements need to be "rational".

He added expenditure for deposits alone for all the constituencies amounted to RM41 million.

"That is already more than RM10 million," Najib said at the Kepala Batas Umno meet today attended by about 3,000 members.

"This amount does not include the costs for T-shirts and meetings," he added.

"RM10 million is neither rational nor logical, so I want to correct the situation," he added.

Najib said he accepted any criticism against him but there were ways to do it, otherwise the people would be confused.

He expressed happiness that the people of Kepala Batas did not accept such remarks.

Dig at Mahathir

Najib also took a tacit dig at Mahathir when he said that the crisis Umno experienced in 1987 was worse than the situation the party faces today.

Najib said during the 1987 Umno crisis, Mahathir only won 41 votes, where half of the Umno delegates rejected him.

He added that Mahathir "buried" the party, and a new entity "Umno Baru" had to be formed.

Najib said the party had to face a by-election in Johor Bahru at the time, where Umno faced a massive loss

"The crisis was massive then but we managed to get Umno out of the crisis.

"1987 was worse because today our party is still intact and not illegal. We will struggle to correct the situation," said Najib.

Najib launched the party's Kepala Batas delegates meeting at the Industrial Training Institute today.

Meanwhile, Najib said he read former premier Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's interview in Mingguan Malaysia where he said he loved the party too much.

"That says it all," reflected Najib, adding this was one of the factors why Umno is able to overcome its many crises.

He said Abdullah, fondly known as Pak Lah, never got angry, held a grudge or cursed the party when he had to quit as premier and was dropped from the cabinet.

Pak Lah continued to campaign for the party in Johor Baru, and in many other places because he loved the party, he said.

"Pak Lah is very sincere and clean to Umno and his character can be an example to us."

Accompanying Najib and Abdullah was Kepala Batas MP Reezal Merican Naina Merican (photo above).

'Enough about funding, move on'

Najib said it was compulsory for the party to have discipline and joint responsibility where party secrets need to be protected.

He added all leaders, from the president, deputy or committee members must know how to carry themselves.

Najib said he never questioned Pak Lah about the party's political funding as it was the exclusive right of the Umno president.

"In all the six years (as deputy prime minister), I never asked, as that is the party president's business.

"How he got the money or funds, who gave the money was his right as party president.

"We also never discussed the matter outside of the party or in party's meetings. I followed the same principle.

"Pak Lah also never questioned the PM. So why ask me now when I am party president?"

"All I did was for the party and not for my own gain. It is also not against the law as decided by the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission," he asserted.

Najib expressed hope that the matter of political funding can be closed and that the party could focus on bigger issues.

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