

PM Najib takes a subtle dig at Dr M
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak took a subtle dig at his predecessor, former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, at the monthly assembly of the Prime Minister's Department today.

Commenting on the recent Budget 2016, Najib said the country ought to lessen its expenditures in light of the country's decreasing revenue.

Possibly making reference to his number one critic, Mahathir, Najib cited the Asian financial crisis which hit the country in 1997 and 1998.

"We should lessen our operating expenditure, just like what happened to the country in 1997 when it experienced the Asian financial crisis.

"But why didn't this happen? Why is it that this time, not only are programmes continued, we have managed to increase programmes for the welfare of the people, including for civil servants," Najib said when addressing the public sector staff today.

During the Asian financial crisis, the ringgit lost at least 50 percent of its value. Mahathir (photo) had then imposed strict capital controls and pegged the ringgit to the US dollar.

Meanwhile, listing the goodies given to civil servants, which include a salary increment to all civil servants effective July 1, 2016, among others, Najib added that all these were possible because the government had taken 'proactive steps'.

'We have made the right judgment'

"(We could do this) because we have made the right judgment, we have built the country's economic resilience when we introduced rationalisation of subsidies and the Goods and Services Tax (GST)," he said.

He further pointed out how, as promised, that revenue collected from the GST would be returned to the rakyat.

"This is what I was able to do when I announced the budget, Alhamdulillah.

"This way, if we can take the proper steps and if we can work as a team, Inshaallah, we can face any situation," he said.

This is not the first time that Najib has justified the implementation of the GST.

Shortly after announcing next year's budget, the prime minister stressed that the taxation system was a 'saviour' to the country's economy.

“Thank Allah that we were able to cope with the fall in government revenue (due to falling oil prices) because we were bold enough to introduce the GST,” Najib said last week.

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