

Affirmative action stays, says Najib
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The government has no intention of doing away with affirmative action for the bumiputeras, said Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

In defending the 10th Malaysia Plan and the New Economic Model, he said he never promised to do away with affirmative action.

"What I promised is that it would be more market friendly and based on merit," he said after chairing a BN supreme council meeting late today.

NONEWhen unveiling the NEM in late March, Najib (left) outlined a policy that favoured liberalisation and acknowledged the 30 per cent bumiputera quota for company ownership was a deterrent for foreign direct investment.

The 10MP, which he unveiled last Thursday, however outlined a minimum 30 per cent bumiputera equity share target in company ownership.

Najib brushed aside claims that the 10MP is not in line with his vision under the NEM, saying that "there is no conflict".

"The (10MP) report by the NEAC (National Economic Action Council) is a clear report and what I tabled (in parliament) is the government's stand," he said.

Najib said the government will release details on the plan, especially on how they intend to develop the 12 national key economic areas (NKEAs) and other sub-sectors in the country.

The NKEAs are oil and gas, palm oil and related products, financial services, wholesale and retail, tourism, information and communications technology (ICT), education services, electrical and electronic, business services, private healthcare, agriculture and Greater Kuala Lumpur.

"This is all in the hope that we can achieve the desired per capita income," he said.

The premier noted that the government will also focus its efforts on the 40 per cent low income group, promising that assistance will be given regardless of race.

No anti-hopping law

To a separate question, Najib swatted aside a demand by the opposition to implement an anti-hopping law on elected representatives.

"Today their people did it (jump). Only now they are making noise, but when they curi (steal) our people they don't make noise," Najib dead-panned.

Najib was responding to a call by DAP national president Karpal Singh to implement an anti-hopping law, following the defection of Malim Nawar assemblyperson Kashvinder Singh earlier today.

Kashvinder quit the DAP and declared himself a BN-friendly independent, claiming the

opposition did nothing to help his constituency.

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