

Najib rejects royal commission to probe Dr M
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Prime Minister Najib Razak said there was no need for a royal commission of inquiry to look into allegations hurled at former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the book 'Malaysian Maverick: Mahathir Mohamad in Turbulent Times' authored by Barry Wain.

"There is always this call for a royal commission, everything you want royal commission, but (this) is not appropriate to call for a royal commission just because somebody has written a book.

"What is important for us is to look forward to the future. Each prime minister has made a lot of contribution, otherwise we wouldn't be what we are today, Malaysia will not be a successful nation and regarded as a role model if all the PMs in the past had not made their contribution," he said.

On Dec 21, DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang in his blog had urged Najib to set up a royal commission to probe the allegations contained in the book, which among others had claimed that Mahathir had squandered up to RM100 billion during his 22 years as prime minister.

In an immediate response, Mahathir in his 'Chedet' blog welcomed the call for a royal inquiry and said he would cooperate fully with the commission. Wain, who is the former managing editor of *Asian Wall Street Journal*, has estimated that Mahathir had squandered up to RM100 billion in his years as PM.

Gentle introduction of GST

Najib also said that there was still time to see the full implications of the Goods and Services (GST) tax in 2011 but nevertheless, believed it would have a neutral impact overall.

"Obviously we have to look at the details of the impact of the GST, but the policy is that basically it will be a gentle introduction and it should have a neutral effect in terms of prices.

"We still have time because it's not going to be implemented until 2011 if we decide to go ahead with it...

"I'm not saying it is for sure but what we have decided to do is to introduce the bill (on it), it is not the second reading yet so we still have the time to look at the full implications of the GST," he said when asked what impact would be on gap in prices of goods sold in the peninsula and East Malaysia.]

BN to mull direct membership

He also said that BN needs to study the suggestion of direct membership into the ruling coalition before making a decision on the matter.

Commenting on the call made by Information Communication and Culture Minister Dr Rais Yatim, Najib, who is also BN chairman, Najib said he would raise the matter with the leaders of BN component parties.

"This is not something new, we (component parties) have talked about it but have not made

an official decision.

"Let me discuss this with the BN component parties at the (BN) supreme council first... we will have to study the pros and cons and the methodology to be employed if we were to go ahead with the direct membership idea.

"All these must be tackled first because we do not want problems to arise later," he told reporters after opening Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah's (PBRs) 14th annual congress in Kota Kinabalu today.

- *Bernama*

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