

## **Aziz Bari's Suspension - Najib Sabotaged By His Own Govt And Party?**

**MalaysianMirror.com**

**October 23, 2011**

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Prof Aziz Bari has become a critical test case whether Malaysia is moving towards greater democratisation, academic excellence and enhanced International competitiveness or the reverse.

The suspension of Aziz by IIUM could not have come at a worse time for Prime Minister Najib Razak's National Transformation Programme whether government, economic or political.

It has firstly thrown into doubt Najib's political will, commitment and stamina whether the Prime Minister and his administration are prepared to see through the wide-ranging government, economic, educational and political reforms without which Malaysia stands no chance of escaping from two decades of middle-income trap, overtaken by one country after another most notably Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea.

Malaysia cannot expect to achieve the goal of a high-income developed nation unless and until we can produce world-class universities, not just in the eyes of Ministers but acknowledged internationally.

The failure of any Malaysian university to get into the recently-released Times Higher Education (THE) World Top 400 Universities Ranking 2011-2012 is powerful testimony that Malaysia is not doing enough to train, retain and recruit talents to transform our economy into a knowledge economy so as to restore our international competitiveness.

The suspension and persecution of Aziz Bari for expressing his views and comments will be a message to the international academic community that Malaysia is not prepared to accept and respect academic freedom resulting in worsening of brain drain of Malaysian talents and condemning the Talents Corporation to failure to attract brain gain from the Malaysian diaspora and the world intellectual resources.

Politically, Aziz's suspension has come as a slap-in-the-face for Najib's recent claim of wanting to make Malaysia 'the best democracy in the world'. If Najib is sincere, then the curbs and fetters undermining academic freedom and excellence like the Universities and University Colleges Act should be repealed!

But instead we have the Aziz Bari persecution - reminder that the undemocratic mentality and mindset of repression in key institutions in the country are still in full control of the levers of power despite all the sloganeering about democratization and political transformation.

Why was Aziz Bari arbitrarily suspended at variance with Najib's call for democratisation and government, economic and political transformation? Is Najib being sabotaged from inside his party and government?

Najib's should direct that the suspension of Aziz by IIUM be revoked immediately and cause an investigation why his call for democratisation and government, economic and political transformation is being flouted so blatantly by his own subordinates in the government and party!

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