

Stop it, Najib tells Gerakan and PPP

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KUALA LUMPUR: The spat between Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia and the People's Progressive Party must stop as it reflects badly on the Barisan Nasional, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said yesterday.

"I feel we have to come up with a solution to cool down the situation as this sort of disagreement will not be good for BN's image."

Najib said he would discuss the matter with the BN chairman, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

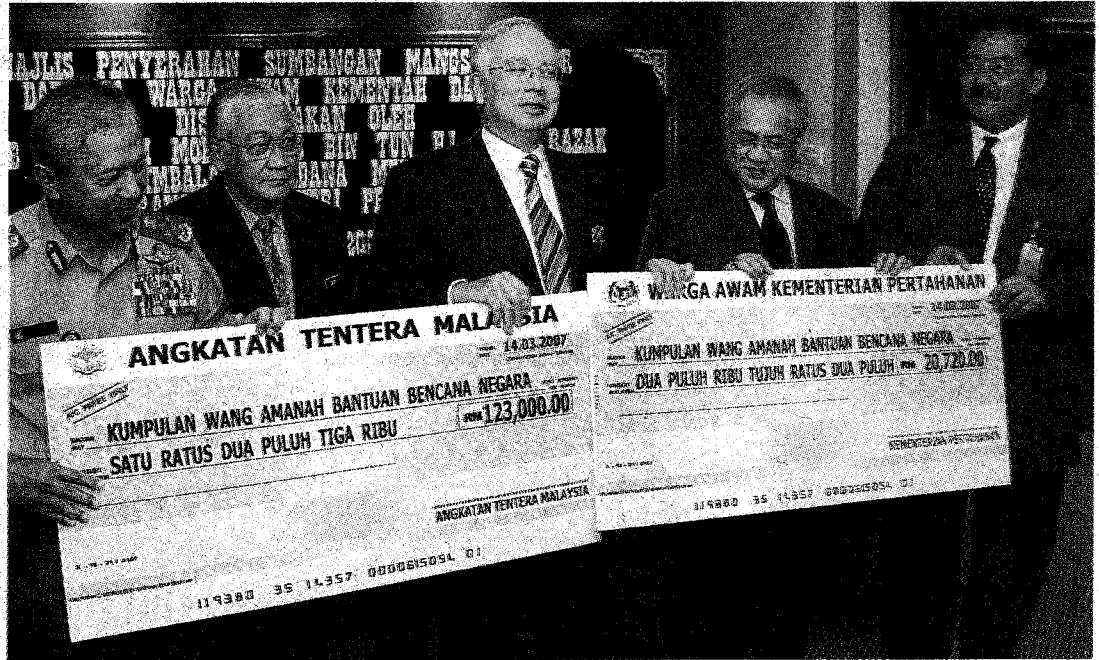
He was commenting on Gerakan's announcement of a boycott of all PPP functions officiated by its president Datuk M. Kayveas yesterday.

Kayveas had drawn the ire of Gerakan members on Monday after saying the Gerakan would "close shop" within five years after its president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik stepped down on April 8.

On the suggestion to extend the National Service programme to two years instead of the existing three months, Najib, who is also Defence Minister, said it was not possible for Malaysia do so at the moment.

He said that no decision had been made on the matter as he had merely been responding to a suggestion put forward by a student at a dialogue during his trip to South Korea.

"She was impressed with the



Najib holding the mock cheques at the ceremony. With him are (from left) Armed Forces chief Jen Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Zainal, Deputy Defence Minister Datuk Zainal Abidin Zin, Defence Ministry Secretary-General Datuk Seri Ahmad Lutfi Hashim and National Security Council director Baharuddin Abdul Hamid.

high discipline levels among the South Koreans which stemmed from their two-year military National Service stint, but it is not possible for us to hold such a programme in Malaysia."

Najib was speaking at a Press conference after receiving contributions totalling RM143,720 from the armed forces and the public for flood victims.

On Malaysia's decline in a regional corruption index survey, Najib said the government was do-

ing its best to reduce corruption.

"There are all sorts of surveys in the market and we do not know the methodologies used in these surveys," he said.

"The government is working hard to try and reduce the level of corruption and increase values such as integrity. It is an ongoing process."

The Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) survey said Malaysia was perceived by foreign businessmen

this year to be more corrupt.

The survey placed Malaysia seventh among the 13 nations polled, one rung lower than last year.

In a grading system with zero as the best possible score and 10 as the worst, Malaysia came in seventh with a score of 6.25.

The Philippines was perceived to be the most corrupt economy in the region, while Singapore and Hong Kong were seen to be the cleanest.