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PM: No point in open debate with Anwar

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PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday said he did not see the point of getting into a debate with opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on Pakatan Rakyat's 100-day plan.

Rather, Najib stressed, the "rakyat's evaluation" was of greater importance when it came to plans for the country.

"It is not that I am declining. What is most important is for the rakyat to evaluate the two of us. We will present our case and they (the opposition) will put up their plans. We can make our assessment on the respective plans and the rakyat will decide.

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"If we want to debate, there must be some benefit derived from it. I don't see any tangible benefit.

"The rakyat's evaluation is of utmost importance," he said when asked about Anwar's challenge to a debate.

Anwar had issued the challenge to debate the opposition's 100-day plan, which Najib had described as "irresponsible".

The loose coalition had last month announced the plan, which would be implemented if it came to power.

Among the proposed reforms include abolishing the Internal Security Act and reducing subsidies for the private sector, providing RM500 monthly increment for teachers and increasing oil royalties by 20 per cent

for Sabah, Sarawak, Terengganu and Kelantan.

Khazanah Nasional Berhad and the Employees Provident Fund would be asked to facilitate the takeover of highway assets by the government to enable the abolition of tolls.

Najib said the loose coalition would make their own presentation and the Barisan Nasional would also present its plan on the matter.

When asked if he would allow others to debate, Najib said: "It is up to them. I will not stop them."

Since the challenge was made by Anwar, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz challenged Anwar to a debate on the Apco issue.