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MAS will not be privatised: Najib

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> PM says on-going recovery plans are yielding results

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PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak has dismissed calls for the privatisation of Malaysia Airlines (MAS) as ongoing recovery plans are yielding results.

He said MAS is not the only airline in the world facing competition and that positive results cannot be expected overnight.

"There are recovery plans in place which are seeing results and we will continue to monitor MAS so that its performance and financial position will become better," he told a press conference at the Finance Ministry's Hari Raya open house yesterday.

Najib, who is also the finance minister, was commenting on a remark by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad that privatisation could be the answer to revitalising the national carrier.

Mahathir had said that privatisation is a good step for MAS to generate large profits as when a company is government-owned, it faces constraints from the point

of finance.

He had added that privatisation will force MAS's management to become more focused in making the airline profitable.

Najib also defended low-cost carrier AirAsia against calls for government servants to choose MAS over it, saying that the airline is also "a Malaysian-owned firm".

"AirAsia is mostly a Malaysian-owned company too. Its profits are our country's profits as well. Don't forget that AirAsia has brought many tourists from abroad," he added.

Meanwhile,

former MAS managing director Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Abdul Rahman said that all MAS needs is the right people and the right government policy to sustain its status as the national carrier.

He said MAS is suffering due to decisions of the government to allow private airlines to be established to directly compete with the national carrier.

"MAS is not an ordinary government-linked company (GLC) as it exists to provide air link for trade and economic purposes. It is the country's pride as it carries the national flag," he said.

