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'Debate won't do BN, Umno good'

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CANCELLED DIALOGUE: Dr M can ask questions and I am willing to explain, says PM

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*Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** says he will continue disseminating information in the best way possible, including **accepting invitations from non-governmental organisations**.*

IT is inappropriate for a prime minister to engage his predecessor, who is also from the same party, in an open debate.

In his blog yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said being drawn into such a debate with Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad would not be any good for Umno and Barisan Nasional.

"As prime minister and Umno president, I am responsible for upholding the good name of the government and party.

"Dr Mahathir is entitled to ask questions and I am willing to give him explanations.

"This is so the reasonable matters raised by him can be claritled," Najib said, referring to "Nothing2Hide: PM's dialogue with non-governmentaI organisations (NGOs)" on Friday, which he was forced not to attend at the last minute, following orders by Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar.

Najib said he was grateful for the invitation to the dialogue, which was organised by the Malaysian Volunteer Lawyers Association and Special Affairs Department.

"The dialogue was to be on current issues.

"It is, among others, to explain that lMalaysia Development Bhd's (1MDB) RM42 billion did not vanish, as alleged by Dr Mahathir.

"On this issue, I am pleased to inform that the Finance Ministry, together with 1MDB, has a rationalisation plan to reduce the company's debts.

"Recently, **1MDB** successfully made a payment of **RM3.6** billion towards this end. Sadly, the effort was not well-received by critics of lMDB's debt."

He said the format of the dialogue was then changed, from being a closed dialogue to an open debate.

"These changes caused the event to serve as a catalyst for an open political confrontation between Dr Mahathir and me."

Najib said it was regrettable that the event had to be cancelled over security .concerns, which resulted in him not being able to carry out his intention to have a dialogue with invited NGOs.

He said, however, that he would continue disseminating information in the best way possible.

"This includes accepting invitations from NGOs, and I will meet NGOs soon."