

**Najib Rising In Popularity, Mahathir Still Revered - Study
Bernama
November 16, 201**

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 16 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's popularity rating has been rising steadily since 2009, according to a poll conducted by the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM).

The study on the popularity of five Malaysian leaders, conducted by IIUM's Media and Election Studies Unit, also found that former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has very much maintained his popularity since leaving office in 2003.

Three other personalities in leadership roles -- PKR de facto chief Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat and Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng -- saw their popularity decline considerably, according to the study.

Datuk Prof Syed Arabi Idid of IIUM's Communications Studies Department led the study, from March 2008 to July 2011, with his research coordinator Azrul Hisyam Wakichan.

An average sample of 1,500 respondents -- Malay, Chinese and Indian registered voters -- were asked how satisfied they were with the leadership qualities of the five leaders.

Prof Syed Arabi attributed Najib's improved rating to his relentless effort to touch base with the people and steer the country to a promising future.

The study clearly indicated that the Malays, Chinese and Indians now find Najib favourable, he said.

In October 2008, 35 per cent of the Malay, 33 per cent of the Chinese and 41 per cent of the Indian respondents noted that they were satisfied or very satisfied with Najib but by July 2011, their approval increased to 59 per cent, 45 per cent and 62 per cent, respectively, he said.

"In a nutshell, people are finding Najib more acceptable now as their leader," said Prof Syed Arabi, who has been conducting studies on the popularity of political personalities since 1989.

On the flagging popularity of Anwar, Nik Aziz and Guan Eng, he said it was probably very much contributed by current issues and their failure to achieve a common ground in many of the issues.

Meanwhile, Azrul Hisyam, who coordinated the study, said Malaysians hold high esteem for Dr Mahathir and his legacy.

An average of 74 per cent of the respondents polled were in favour of Dr Mahathir throughout the four-year period, he said.

He noted that Malaysians see Dr Mahathir as a proven leader and a man who still speaks his mind without fear or favour.

"They see him as an exemplary leader," he said.

---BERNAMA

Copyright © 2011 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsindex.php?id=627305>