

Pro-BN online users our new army, says Najib
The Malaysian Insider
November 20, 2011
By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 20 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak today voiced his unconditional support towards pro-Barisan Nasional bloggers and social media users, calling them Barisan Nasional's (BN) "new army."

The BN chief said that the online world is the new battlefield between the opposition and BN and that many people now visited websites, portals and blogs as a means to access information.

"Barisan Nasional recognises you all, social media practitioners. You are our fighters, our new army," Najib said today after launching 1 Malaysia Social Media Convention here.

The prime minister said that BN leaders and members need to be able to adapt to changing times by becoming affluent with social media if it wanted to remain relevant.

Social media has become increasingly important politically with 11.3 million Malaysians on Facebook in the middle of the year, a figure that continues to grow.

Najib told attendees here, mostly pro-BN bloggers that they need to explain to Malaysians online of the government's efforts and successes and also to combat the "lies and half-truths" of the opposition.

"This is the role of the online warrior, who will go to the ground online using their blackberries, laptops, Ipads.

"If we cannot tackle this new wave, we will be swept away," said Najib.

He said that he himself was an active online user and strived to keep abreast with the latest technological innovations.

As an example, Najib said that he recorded a live recording of himself during his recent Hajj pilgrimage using his Iphone 4 and it was broadcast to the public on national television.

"If we cannot defend ourselves against the opposition, by default we will lose," added the PM.

Also present at the function was Dr Novandri Hasan Bari, a Penang Umno leader and blogger known for his attacks against the Penang government.

One of the convention's committee members, P. Kamalanathan told a news conference later that the event today attracted almost 2,000 participants.

The Hulu Selangor MP said that the convention aimed among other things to promote good ethics in blogging, tweeting as well as Facebooking.

A recent survey by global information and analytics provider Nielsen last month found that Malaysians spend on average of 20 hours online each week.

Nielsen's analysis covered 1, 321 frequent digital users in Malaysia who used the Internet for four weeks in October.

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