

PAS veep questions Rosmah's Raya TV slot
The Malaysian Insider
September 03, 2011
By Boo Su-Lyn

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 3 — PAS vice-president Datuk Mahfuz Omar has questioned Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor's television slot for her Hari Raya message, pointing out that this was a first for a prime minister's wife.

The Pokok Sena MP said Rosmah may have taken this unusual step to boost her husband Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's flagging popularity.

"Rosmah is the first person in history to get her own special slot to give a Hari Raya speech besides the prime minister," Mahfuz was quoted as saying by party organ Harakah Daily.

"Before this, no prime minister's wife has ever received her own slot to give a Hari Raya speech. Before this, only the prime minister had his own slot," he added.

The PAS lawmaker said it was possible that Rosmah herself had demanded for the special television slot.

"After all, she has huge powers as the prime minister's wife," he said, referring to allegations that Rosmah was more powerful than Najib.

Mahfuz added that if Rosmah had indeed asked for the special slot, she could have done so to satisfy her aspirations, or to improve Najib's approval rating that recently fell to 59 per cent.

"Maybe when Najib's and Rosmah's Hari Raya speeches are forced over and over again upon television viewers throughout Hari Raya, Najib's approval rating may jump to 95 per cent," said Mahfuz sarcastically.

A survey by independent pollster Merdeka Center released last Monday found that 59 per cent of Malaysians approved of Najib's leadership, down six points in the past three months, and 13 points lower than his high of 72 per cent in May last year.

Respondents said they were most troubled by the surge in inflation — which hit a two-year high of 3.5 per cent in June — and the government's heavily criticised handling of the July 9 Bersih rally for free and fair elections.

Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has said that the PM's sliding popularity signified a voter shift to Pakatan Rakyat (PR).

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, however, has played down the survey results, pointing out that the findings depended largely on its sample size.

The survey involved respondents aged 21 and above across the peninsula who were selected through a random stratified sampling method along the lines of ethnicity, gender, age and state of residency. Of the 1,027 polled, 59 per cent were Malays, 32 per cent Chinese and nine per cent Indians.

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