

Time for reforms running out, Kit Siang warns Najib
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By Debra Chong

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 1 — DAP's Lim Kit Siang reminded Datuk Seri Najib Razak today that the ruling Barisan Nasional's (BN) mandate was nearing its expiry, and warned the prime minister to carry out his promised reforms soon or face voter backlash in the coming polls.

The BN still has some 19 months to go before its mandate ends in March 2013, but Najib, whose popularity dipped six points in a recent opinion poll, is widely expected to call for general elections by the end of this year to avoid the repercussions of a predicted gloomy global economy next year.

"Malaysians flew the national flag yesterday but most of them have a common disquieting question — Quo Vadis Malaysia?" the senior opposition leader asked. (The Latin phrase translates to 'where are you going, Malaysia?')

Lim noted that many of yesterday's National Day messages from the ruling coalition's component party leaders called for Malaysians of diverse racial and religious backgrounds to be more united, moderate and tolerant of each other, which the DAP stalwart claimed had fallen flat.

This, Lim said, was because of the present-day "divisive and discordant" national landscape, coupled with Najib's inability to stamp his mark as a leader.

The Ipoh-Timur MP pointed to what he described as "irresponsible and reckless attempts to polarise the country along race and religious lines", and gave as an example government broadcaster RTM's recent show in the run-up to National Day that reportedly linked several DAP leaders and the chairman of Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) to a Facebook group calling itself "Murtads in Malaysia & Singapore".

"Lies have become the staple diet served by the mainstream media, whether the canard that DAP wants to create a Christian Malaysia and have a Christian prime minister or the falsehood that the PAS deputy president Mat Sabu glorified the communists and regarded Datuk Onn Jaafar and Bapa Malaysia Tunku Abdul Rahman as traitors," Lim said in a statement today.

He said such efforts were not helping to unite Malaysia's multiracial and multireligious people, but the opposite.

Lim stressed that if Najib was serious and sincere in being PM for all, he must "walk the talk to provide leadership or be exposed as a purveyor of empty slogans", listing the numerous government and economic reform policies that have been rolled out, revised and delayed since the latter took office in April 2009.

"The successful Bersih rally of July 9 is proof that if Najib and those in power refuse to act, then ordinary Malaysians whether Malays, Chinese, Indians, Kadazans, Ibans or Orang Asli, whether Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Taoists, Confucianists or Sikhs are prepared to act in unison to save Malaysia," Lim said.

A recent opinion poll by local research house Merdeka Center found over two-thirds of

Malaysians agree with the demands mooted by electoral reform group Bersih 2.0 while close to half disagreed with the way Putrajaya handled the July 9 rally and the events leading up to it.

Bersih 2.0 has demanded that Putrajaya execute eight electoral reforms before the next general election and said it will step up its outreach programme for further support ahead of national polls.

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