

Political reforms a step forward for Malaysia

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PETALING JAYA: The political reforms carried out by the Government are a "giant stride forward" for the country while preserving the civil liberties of the people.

Institute of Strategic and International Studies (Isis) chairman Tan Sri Mohamed Jawhar Hassan said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak was leading Malaysia into the 21st century by getting it apace with developed nations.

"There will always be critics who rubbish the reforms but this is due to lack of information and knowledge. No doubt that some people will think these reforms are just to make the Government look good for the coming polls.

"However, this would be petty. We will be missing the bigger picture," he said.

Mohamed Jawhar said the reforms were "a little bit of history in the making", citing the efforts to repeal the Internal Security Act (ISA) and lifting the emergency proclamations and Emergency Ordinance as examples.

He said the changes allowed greater fundamental rights while ensuring that the authorities continued to have effective powers to protect national security and public order.

Asli Centre of Public Policy Studies chairman Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam said the repeal of the ISA was a step in the right direction but proper implementation of the law should be carried out.

Political scientist and Bersih steering committee member Wong Chin Huat said the amendment to the Universities and University Colleges Act was a good gesture but urged for more reforms.

"The move to repeal the ISA is welcomed but it is not enough. We must also reform the Sedition Act, which can be misused as well," he said.

The first step to abolish the controversial ISA was taken when the Security Offences (Special Measures) Bill 2012, which aims to repeal the ISA, was tabled in the Dewan Rakyat for first reading on Tuesday.

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