

**Najib's silence is deafening, says Singapore's Straits Times  
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The silence is deafening from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak (pic) and his office as his government marks its 100th day in office, a stark contrast from his reformist style in 2009.

Singapore daily, Straits Times, in a special report today said that Najib's silence on a variety of issues, ranging from the spate of violent crime to increasing religious tension, was very different from when he first assumed office.

Four years ago, by the time he racked up 100 days in office, Najib introduced broad spectrum reforms, from lifting bans on two opposition newspapers to toll discounts for frequent highway users.

Broad plans were laid out for the public, including the introduction of the National Key Result Area strategies to combat crime, corruption and raise education standards.

Although he won plaudits for his bold and incisive reforms despite facing opposition from within his own party, the results of the 13th general election was a setback.

The upcoming Umno general assembly is also another reason Najib seems to be missing his spark and can-do spirit, some observers speculated.

Barisan Nasional fared worst at the 13th general election under Najib's leadership despite spending millions of ringgit trying to win votes.

Many have speculated that Najib might be shown the door at the Umno general election, similar to the man he succeeded as prime minister, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"The aftershocks of the polls are still being felt," the Straits Times quoted the dean of the communications department at the International Islamic University Malaysia, Dr Syed Arabi Idid, as saying.

"Najib, his 31 Ministers and 25 deputy Ministers, will need more than 100 days to settle in," Syed Arabi added.

The opposition, on the other hand, gave Najib the thumbs down for his first 100 days in office, accusing him of neglecting the country to focus on defending his position.

Anthony Loke, DAP national organising secretary, lashed out at Najib, saying there has been no clear direction in Malaysia's economic, political or nation-building policies.

Although there have been rumours that Najib's deputy, both in the government and Umno, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, might challenge him, but some say it won't happen.

"I don't see signs of Muhyiddin challenging Najib at this point as it could damage the party," Ramli Yunus, an Umno division secretary in Kedah, told the Straits Times.

Najib's first 100 days in office has seen controversy after controversy emerge with violent

crime on the rise and racial sentiments heated due to postings on social media.

Besides internal problems, Najib also has a battle on his hands on the economic front with Malaysia's sovereign outlook downgraded from stable to negative due to rising debt and lack of reforms.

According to the Singapore daily, Malaysia is also spending far more than it earns for the 16th year in a row but cutting the nation's budget deficit would involve introducing unpopular measures.

With Barisan Nasional losing the popular vote for the first time ever in the last polls, many wonder whether Najib would dare to cut subsidies, which would further increase his unpopularity.

The government's cause has also not been helped with conflicting statements by Cabinet members, who seem to be focused on defending their posts in the Umno general assembly.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has been vocal about reintroducing preventive laws to curb crime.

Then Najib issued a statement clearly outlining his determination not to bring back the laws which he had repealed, ironically during his first 100 days in office in 2009.

Amidst all this, Malaysians ponder, what is the government up to? - August 23, 2013.

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