

'Poor handling of crisis tarnishing image'

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KAJANG: Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim said Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak's weak leadership in handling the missing MH370 flight crisis has caused Malaysia's image to be tarnished in the international circle.

"Najib accuses Pakatan Rakyat of politicising the issue but it is he who does not know how to handle the matter," the PKR de facto leader told a ceramah in Jalan Avenue, here last night.

"A nation in crisis needs strong leadership. The leadership failure here is what the whole world is watching now.

"Najib spent RM70 million in consultation fees to Apco Worldwide to create an image of a good man. How much is he going to spend to mend the nation's image?" asked Anwar.

Anwar accused Najib of being the "most inefficient and incompetent Prime Minister".

National carrier MAS flight MH370 with 239 passengers on board went missing last week.

Twelve nations have come forward to conduct a search-and-rescue mission.

Since then, Acting Transport Minister Hishamuddin Hussein, Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Inspector-General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar, Department of Civil Aviation director-general Azharuddin Abdul Rahman and several other officials have been issuing statements that are at times contradicting one another.

Various countries involved in the search-and-rescue mission and the media have complained that the Malaysian government lacked transparency and is not sharing information.

Anwar said Malaysia handled the Highland Tower collapse in 1993 and the 1975 Japanese Red Army crisis in a better way.

On Aug 5, 1975 the Japanese Red Army took control of the AIA building and held American and Swedish diplomats as hostages.

"When the Highland Towers collapsed, I was the Deputy Prime Minister. All the authorities discussed first before issuing a statement. Whenever a body was found, we announced it within the first 15 minutes," said Anwar.

He said during the Japanese Red Army hostage situation, the then premier, Tun Razak Hussein, appointed the Home Ministry secretary-general Osman Samsudin Cassim to handle the matter.

“The crises showed that our staff were competent and that created a positive image for the nation,” he added.

Bomoh debacle

He also accused Umno of trying their wash their hands off in their attempt to bring in a bomoh to locate the missing plane.

Minister in Prime Minister’s Department in charge of Islamic affairs, Jamil Khir Baharom, had said Umno had nothing to do with the bomoh in KLIA.

“He is lying,” said Anwar. “How can one enter a high security area so easily?”

On Wednesday, bomoh Ibrahim Mat Zin used two coconuts and other utensils in an attempt to locate the missing plane.

The March 23 Kajang by-election will see a straight fight between PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and MCA vice president Chew Mei Fun.

The Kajang state seat fell vacant following the resignation of incumbent assemblyman Lee Chin Cheh of PKR on Jan 27. Early polling would be held on March 19.

The state seat comprises 39,728 registered voters. At the last general election in May 2013, the seat saw a voter turnout of 87.9% with 541 spoilt votes.

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