

Najib rebuts critics in blog post
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As Datuk Seri Najib Razak faces an onslaught of criticism in his second term, the prime minister took to his website to refute some of the key accusations made by his benefactor-turned-detractor Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed today.

In the FAQ section of his blog NajibRazak.com, the Umno president listed 13 issues and claims that had been hurled at him and his administration, from the murder of Mongolian Altantuya Shaariibuu, the use of government jets and Barisan Nasional winning the next general election.

Below is a summary of the 10 other points Najib made in his blog post.

* On claims that the international media has labelled the country as the most corrupt in the world, Najib said these reports are surveys based on perceptions.

He however, referred to the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index which ranks Malaysia at 50 out of 175 countries surveyed. Malaysia moved up three spots from last year.

* Najib also took aim at Dr Mahathir's argument that the 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) was a form of bribery, by saying it was part of a target subsidy scheme benefiting low income families.

BR1M, Najib wrote, was a lot more efficient than blanket subsidies such as for petrol and sugar, which also benefit the rich.

The cash aid is also given out regardless of political affiliation and whether or not there is an election.

* Najib then responded to allegations surrounding debt-laden state investment firm 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB), by imploring his critics to wait for the results of the Auditor-General's investigation.

He reiterated that the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) was also looking into 1MDB and promised to take action against anyone found guilty of misappropriation or embezzlement.

* Another of Dr Mahathir's criticism was that Najib did not have the courage to build the crooked bridge between Johor and Singapore because of the island republic's disapproval of the project.

Najib wrote that Singapore's agreement was needed to tear down the causeway to build the bridge as the water pipes in the causeway belonged to Singapore.

"Any such bridge, if built in place of the Johor causeway without the express permission from Singapore's PUB (Public Utilities Board), will be in breach of property rights under international law."

* Najib also refuted Dr Mahathir's accusation that he performed worse than his immediate predecessor Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in the 13th general election by losing more parliamentary seats.

Najib said the BN defeated PAS to regain the Kedah government and maintained its hold in Perak, which had been lost in the 12th general election.

Umno also won more seats in 13th general election, he said.

* On claims that he was ignoring the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) in favour of Pemandu, Najib said the latter was a steering body that oversees his administration's transformation programmes.

Pemandu deals with both economic and non-economic policies, while the EPU focuses exclusively on economic ones.

"I even appointed one of the most capable CEOs in the country (Datuk Seri Abdul Wahid Omar) to head EPU," Najib wrote.

* Najib also refuted the view that his administration was sidelining civil servants through the use of private consultants.

"The civil service have always been and forever will be at the centre of the country's administration and operations. The civil service runs the country on a day-to-day basis.

"Just because a few individuals and parties are appointed to assist does not mean their experiences are no longer needed. This is simply an unfair comment that lacks objectivity. Assist, yes; take over, no."

* Najib rubbished claims that he was abandoning bumiputera-centric affirmative action, stressing that he had earmarked RM47.95 billion worth of aid for the Bumiputera Empowerment Programme under the Teraju agency.

His administration was also focused on growing the country's economy so that all communities can move up the social ladder.

* Najib took some of his detractors to task for saying that his 1Malaysia slogan was the same as the DAP's "Malaysian Malaysia".

Unlike, the DAP's credo, 1Malaysia accepts Article 153 of the Federal Constitution which deals with the special position of the Malays and has pro-bumiputera policies such as the Bumiputera Empowerment Council, he wrote.

"To say that 1Malaysia is equivalent to Malaysian Malaysia is nothing short of a distortion from reality, with the sole intention of misleading the Malays."

* Another claim that Najib said was untrue was that crime had increased ever since the Internal Security Act was abolished in 2013.

"Last year alone, the police managed to reduce crime rates in the country by 12.6%. Violent crime in the country has also dropped by 13.4%.

"As a matter of fact, 8,868 individuals were detained and 280 weapons were seized in the recently launched Ops Cantas Khas.

"When ISA was first launched, its sole purpose was to fight the communist insurgency and today it has become irrelevant."

In its place Najib said, is the Prevention of Terrorism Act (Pota). Like ISA, Pota provides for detention without trial but Najib pledged that it would not be used for political ends. – May 17, 2015.

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