

**Paper says Singapore better than Malaysia despite authoritarian government**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
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A hard-hitting opinion piece by international business daily Financial Times (FT) has compared Singapore's achievements with Malaysia's, saying that despite the city-state's tightly controlled society, its ruling party is largely appreciated by Singaporeans due to the success of its socio-economic policies.

In comments on Singapore's Golden Jubilee celebrations yesterday, which marked 50 years since its separation from Malaysia, FT said the difficulties faced by Singapore "paled in comparison with those in Malaysia".

"Not only is Malaysia going through its worst political crisis in years after hundreds of millions of dollars found their way into the bank accounts of (Datuk Seri) Najib Razak, the prime minister," said FT, referring to allegations surrounding Najib in the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) saga.

"More critically, Malaysia has been undergoing a long-term meltdown in which the political, religious and ethnic compact that has underpinned the country since independence groans under its own rotten contradictions," said the paper, noting that Singapore's per capita gross domestic product is five times that of Malaysia's.

FT said Malaysia could learn from Singapore, adding that its fight against corruption should start with Najib coming clean on the 1MDB affair, or stepping down.

Drawing comparisons between PAP and Umno, the two political parties which have dominated Singapore and Malaysia respectively since independence, FT said Singaporeans still regarded PAP as "honest and competent", despite recent inroads by opposition parties in the republic.

On the other hand, it said the Malaysian public "senses" that Umno has long fronted a corrupt system.

But the paper acknowledged that both countries are vastly different in terms of demography, and that Singapore's micromanagement style might not work for Malaysia.

"Still, both countries have potentially combustible ethnic mixes. Singapore has done better at forging a sense of fairness and national unity, through language, meritocracy and incorruptibility.

"Malaysia, in the name of protecting Malays through positive discrimination, has by contrast created a crony capitalist state," said FT, calling for the dismantling of religion and race-based policies. – August 10, 2015.

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