

Dr Mahathir's RM10 million election expenditure 'illogical', says Najib
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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak today slammed his loudest critic Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who claimed that he spent under RM10 million in each election campaign when he was prime minister and head of Umno.

Najib, who is facing criticism for receiving RM2.6 billion in his personal accounts shortly before the 2013 General Election, said it was illogical and irrational that an election campaign only cost RM10 million.

He said he had pondered over Dr Mahathir's figures over and over again and found it illogical.

"He said in the 90s he spent only RM10 million. I thought about that repeatedly. With the election deposits for 193 parliamentary seats and the state seats in them, you would need at least RM41 million.

"That is just the minimum expenditure if you spend RM100,000 per parliamentary seat and RM50,000 per state seat for the deposits.

"That is excluding the money the party would spend on election materials, like billboards, banners, posters, shirts and meetings.

"The RM10 million is not reasonable. Even if you want to criticise, do it with basis. It must be logical and factual," he told Umno delegates at the Kepala Batas division meeting today in Penang.

Najib also said when he was deputy to Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the former Umno president who took over from Dr Mahathir, he never questioned his party boss on matter that were his superior's prerogative.

"I never asked him about political funding for the party all those six years I was his deputy. How he got the money, who gave the money were all under his discretion.

"We never discussed such matters in the party supreme council, let alone openly. We only wanted to know that things were doing properly all the way to the elections.

"That is the principle that I hold on to today. Pak Lah also never questioned Dr Mahathir or (former finance minister) Tun Daim (Zainuddin about money when they were in power)," he said.

Najib asked why he was being questioned now when there were no such issues faced by his predecessors.

"Why question me when what I have done was for the party and not for my own gain?"

I also did not break any laws." he said, adding that the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission had also cleared him.

Najib said the issue should end now so that Umno could focus on moving ahead.

"We have much to do to help the people. If we are preoccupied with this, when will we focus on the people's interest?

"We must ask the people what they want, what they need... that is what Umno must be doing. We must care about the people. Do they have affordable housing, education or struggling with cost of living?"

Najib also concurred that Umno was dealing with negative perception due to the use of social media.

He said in the cyber realm, what was false could simply be regarded as the truth while reports in the printed media were disregarded.

In the social media, netizens treated others as guilty until their innocence could be proven.

He said people had believed talk that Barisan Nasional brought in Bangladeshi to vote so that they would win during the last general elections.

"Social media is the main problem now and the question of perception is something we must remedy.

"These days, we don't know what is true in the Sarawak Report site. We don't know if emails were doctored or not. They say RM42 billion in 1MDB (1Malaysia Development Berhad) were lost, but how come there are so much interest in buying 1MDB assets?

"Let the Public Accounts Committee investigate...a person is innocent til proven guilty, and it shoud not be the other way," he said.

Najib is facing turbulent times in his political career over the controversies surrounding the debt-ridden federal investment fund 1MDB and the RM2.6 billion donation.

For months now he has been attacked daily by critics, including Dr Mahathir and social media users, apart from his political rivals from opposition parties over the two scandals. – August 16, 2015.

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