

Almost 60 years of Umno rule cause of Malaysia's woes, says FT
The Malaysian Insider
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The Financial Times (FT) blames Malaysia's troubles on the fact that the country has been ruled by one party for too long.

In an editorial yesterday, the international business daily said having the same party in charge of the government since 1957 is "too long, and suggests that the fate of the state and Umno have been fused", referring to the main component party in the Barisan Nasional ruling coalition.

"The scandal over the troubled Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and the RM2.6 billion transferred to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's personal bank account aside, Malaysia faces deeper problems.

"The fact is that the country's political system is still heavily dependent on patronage, for which read sluicing money to political supporters. And it seems, Malaysia's institutions, including the police and possibly the anti-corruption commission, are not up to the task of carrying out proper investigations independently of the government," FT said.

The end result of this, according to FT, is that Najib sometimes appears to act as though his own survival, and that of his party, is more important than the wellbeing of the country.

Over the weekend, tens of thousands of Malaysians took to the streets of Kuala Lumpur, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah and Kuching, Sarawak in peaceful protest for the Bersih 4 rally calling for free and fair elections, a transparent government, the right to demonstrate, strengthening the parliamentary democracy system, as well as saving the national economy.

They were joined by thousands more Malaysians who organised their own Bersih 4 protests in many major cities around the world.

The protesters also called for Najib to explain the debt amassed by the state-owned investment vehicle 1MDB and the use of the political donation of RM2.6 billion, which was in the prime minister's personal account.

Najib has denied any wrongdoing, saying that the large sum was donated by a supporter from the Middle East, though he will not say who.

He also claims that the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission has cleared him, saying that the money was not from funds linked to 1MDB, of which Najib is chairman of the advisory board.

"Malaysia does not have a robust democracy," FT said, suggesting that in most democratically-elected governments, the prime minister would have been obliged to

give full explanations on scandals such as 1MDB and the political donation transferred into his personal account, or step down.

"On the contrary, the Najib administration has moved decisively against the bodies that were meant to be investigating him." – August 31, 2015.

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