

Huge challenge getting understanding from Malaysians, says Najib
The Malaysian Insider
Oct 6, 2015
By Eileen Ng

Datuk Seri Najib Razak has described his government's challenge to get Malaysians to understand the efforts put in to battling economic headwinds as "almost a losing battle".

Referring to external events impacting Malaysia, including the devaluation of the yuan, an anticipated interest rate hike by the United States and depressed commodity prices, the prime minister acknowledged that these had affected economic growth and the performance of the ringgit.

"Also whereas the government was able to stimulate growth after the 2008 global financial crisis via the RM7 billion and RM60 billion stimulus packages, we now have a more limited public fiscal growth.

"This limitation is due to our goal to reduce our fiscal deficit and our sovereign debt levels, and lower fiscal deficit and trying to get some understanding from the rakyat is a huge challenge, sometimes almost a losing battle.

"When you become PM, for example, the price of petrol goes up, you get blamed. When the price of petrol goes down, they say it is market forces. So, you never really win," he said in his closing speech at the Khazanah Megatrends Forum 2015 in Kuala Lumpur today.

Najib said never in the country's history had so many external events occurred at once, and affected the economy with a slight downtick in growth, below the initial projected 5% to 6%.

Despite assurances from Putrajaya that Malaysia's fundamentals are strong, concerns have been mounting over the economy as the ringgit, Asia's worst performing currency in the past year, slide beyond the RM4 mark against the US dollar.

Besides the external factors attributed by Najib, analysts had also said the sluggish economy was linked to Najib's political scandal.

He is currently under fire over the RM2.6 billion "donation" from an unknown Middle Easterner, which was channeled into his personal bank accounts, while at the same time, his brainchild, state investment firm 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) is facing multiple probes into alleged financial irregularities.

Recently, Najib had announced a new committee to ensure Malaysia's economic growth continued in the face of what he described as "uncertain and challenging times".

"The committee's objective is to ensure Malaysia's growth momentum will continue

for some time and be able to generate prosperity in the rather uncertain and challenging times." – October 6, 2015.

Copyright © 2015 Edge Insider Sdn Bhd

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/getting-understanding-from-malaysians-huge-challenge-says-najib>