

Too early to praise Najib's projects, says MP

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Wong Chen: 'Nobody believes Najib is better than Mahathir when it comes to infrastructure development.'

PETALING JAYA: PKR's Wong Chen has told off a pro-government blogger for praising the current government's transport projects in a Facebook post that criticised similar projects undertaken under Mahathir Mohamad's administration.

The Kelana Jaya MP said the praise, which came from Lim Sian See, was premature.

Lim wrote yesterday that all the major projects under Mahathir, who was premier from 1981 to 2003, had gone bankrupt.

Wong said only time would tell if the projects undertaken under Najib Razak's administration would create cost-effective economic multipliers.

"LSS is making an unfair comparison because the Mahathir transport projects were privatisations that over time went bad, whereas Najib's projects are owned by the government and are new," he said.

He said Lim had the right to criticise Mahathir, who is now Pakatan Harapan and PPBM chairman, but was making an unproven assertion with his claim that Najib was better than Mahathir.

"Nobody in Malaysia believes that Najib is better than Dr Mahathir when it comes to infrastructure development," Wong told FMT.

He claimed that the consensus in the market was that Najib's transport projects were overpriced.

"The Najib government has never definitively declared the cost of his mega transport projects and the costs keep rising and changing," he said.

In the Facebook posting yesterday, Lim highlighted the failures of the KL Monorail, Putra LRT, Star LRT and Intrakota bus service projects.

“All four major Kuala Lumpur public transportation projects under the Mahathir administration were given to private companies via concessions and then promptly went bankrupt,” he wrote. “The government had to bail out all of them.”

He noted that the government-owned Prasarana eventually took over all four public transport services and said this was a bailout of the companies which had failed to manage the services.

He said none of Najib’s public transportation projects – LRT1 extension, LRT2 extension and MRT – were implemented with concession agreements, adding that they were fully in the hands of the government.

“There is no need for concession agreements that require periodic fees increases and the projects were also all delivered either on time and on budget or ahead of time and below budget,” he said.

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