

APPENDIX A
Mainstream Newspapers Articles

Thursday January 26, 2012

MB: Najib, Anwar debate won't help

IPOH: Any debate outside Parliament between Opposition Leader [Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim](#) and [Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak](#) will only serve the political interests of certain parties and not the *rakyat*.

Perak Menteri Besar [Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir](#) said debates on Government policies and issues affecting the *rakyat* should not be held in public.

“They can debate the issues in Parliament, where it is the duty of MPs to raise matters affecting the *rakyat*,” he said after chairing the weekly state executive council meeting here yesterday.

20 February 2012 | last updated at 07:48PM

<http://www.nst.com.my/nation/general/no-benefit-in-najib-anwar-debate-1.49572>

'No benefit in Najib-Anwar debate'

KUALA LUMPUR -- The opposition proposal for a debate between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim will not benefit the people in any way, said an Umno divisional leader.

Cheras Umno Division chief Datuk Syed Ali Alhabshee said he feared that the proposal for the debate on national economic issues could just be a political ploy of the opposition.

He claimed that Anwar, the MP for Permatang Pauh, was not an economic expert.

Anwar may want to divert public attention from the criticism he is getting over his remarks about the Jewish regime, he said.

PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar and PKR vice-president NurulIzzah Anwar had suggested that the prime minister debate with Anwar on national issues, particularly those related to the economy.

Commenting on last Saturday's debate between MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng, he said it was merely part of the political campaign and not a gauge of the people's support for either political party. --
Bernama

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Dr M: No point debating with Anwar the chameleon

PUTRAJAYA: It will be pointless for the Prime Minister to debate with Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim because the Opposition Leader is a “chameleon”, said former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

“He is a chameleon. When he is with the Chinese, he condemns the NEP (New Economic Policy). When he is with the Indians, he is Indian. When he is with Muslims, he talks about Islam.

“There is nothing to debate with Anwar,” he said after meeting top leaders of the Malay rights group Perkasa here yesterday.

He said Malaysians were also “not yet that mature” to deal with political debates, adding that the public still had a tendency to allow emotions to take over from rational discussion.

“This is not America but, even in the US, debates only serve to expose how stupid the candidates are,” he said.

Dr Mahathir said he had no problem with debates, quickly adding, however, that it would not “lead to anything constructive”.

“A debate is okay but at the end of the day, it won’t come to any kind of conclusion,” he said.

Dr Mahathir also played down the need for a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the problem of illegal immigrants in Sabah, saying that it was something that the Government should be more than capable of handling on its own.

“I think it is a problem but we don’t need an RCI on it. The Government will have to go through its records and deal with this issue,” he said.

During the function, Perkasa chief Datuk Ibrahim Ali also challenged DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng to a debate on the topic of “Who is more racist – DAP or Perkasa? And who is a troublemaker?”.

He said this was a good time to challenge Lim as excitement from the Penang Chief Minister’s debate with MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek was “still fresh”.

He proposed the debate be televised nationwide but without a live audience so he could produce facts which he claimed he had recorded “since May 13”.

Ibrahim also said Perkasa planned to sue Lim over his allegations during Saturday’s debate.

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Debates won't solve anything, says former PM Abdullah

KUALA LUMPUR: Debates "are not something that decide the election," says Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"A debate doesn't solve problems. What is more important is that the government is able to contribute to the people through implementation of programmes," he said.

The former premier was commenting on calls for a debate between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

This follows the debate on Chinese issues between MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng on Saturday.

Speaking to reporters after opening the national seminar on achievements of post-merdeka Muslims, Abdullah said Barisan Nasional "is capable of a significant victory in the 13th general election."

He stressed however that the efforts and hard work by BN leaders in their service to the population must be continuous.

"It is important that the winnable candidate is highly dedicated in serving the people," he said. BERNAMA

Ahli akademik sokong debat Anwar-Najib tidak perlu

KUALA LUMPUR 21 Feb. - Sikap Ketua Pembangkang, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yang sering memutarbelitkan fakta merupakan faktor utama debat antara beliau dan Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak tidak perlu diadakan.

Walaupun para penganalisis politik menyifatkan debat merupakan landasan baik untuk rakyat mengenali pemimpin, namun ia bukan untuk pemimpin seperti Anwar.

Tokoh akademik, Tan Sri Ibrahim Abu Shah menegaskan, Anwar terkenal sebagai individu yang hebat dalam memanipulasi keadaan.

"Saya sokong kenyataan Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad bahawa debat ini membuang masa, lebih baik Perdana Menteri beri tumpuan terhadap usaha memperkukuhkan jentera Barisan Nasional terutama menjelang pilihan raya umum ini," katanya ketika dihubungi di sini, hari ini.

Beliau percaya jika debat itu diadakan, Anwar akan cuba menutup kelemahan diri dengan melemparkan pelbagai tuduhan terhadap kerajaan.

Ibrahim berkata demikian bagi mengulas kenyataan bekas Perdana Menteri itu yang menyebut perdebatan itu hanya membuang masa dan tidak mampu menyelesaikan masalah yang dihadapi rakyat negara ini.

Sementara itu, Profesor Politik dan Kerajaan Jabatan Pengajian, Kenegaraan dan Ketamadunan Fakulti Ekologi Manusia, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Prof. Dr. Jayum Jawan berkata, antara perkara yang perlu dielakkan ialah debat yang tidak matang menyebabkan ia 'hanyut' daripada fokus asal debat itu diadakan.

"Justeru saya fikir kenyataan Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad menolak sesi debat itu kerana kemungkinan Anwar akan mengheret isu-isu yang tidak ada kena mengena dalam usaha memperkasakan bangsa dan negara," katanya.

Beliau yakin jika debat itu diadakan, Najib sebagai Perdana Menteri tidak akan lari daripada fokus sebenar kerana beliau merupakan kerajaan yang melaksanakan dasar.

Dalam pada itu Pensyarah Sosial Sains, Pusat Pengajian Sains Kemasyarakatan, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Profesor Madya Sivamurugan Pandian berkata, debat tidak sepatutnya menyeleweng daripada dasar dan isu utama serta tidak bersifat emosional.

"Justeru saya rasa adalah lebih baik debat antara pemimpin peringkat bawahan terlebih dahulu, kita lihat bagaimana situasi debat antara mereka, lepas itu baru kita buat keputusan sama ada perlu atau tidak debat antara pemimpin tertinggi ini diadakan," katanya.

Politik buang masa pembangkang

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Gaya Anwar Ibrahim menyampaikan ceramah politik.

APABILA pelbagai pihak bersetuju agar Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak tidak membuang masa dengan melayan kehendak pembangkang untuk beliau berdebat dengan Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, ia adalah saranan yang tepat.

Perdana Menteri tidak perlu membuang masa melayan tuntutan tidak berfaedah tersebut memandangkan cadangan berdebat berkenaan bukan sahaja bertujuan bagi mengalih isu tetapi juga sememangnya strategi pembangkang untuk meraih simpati rakyat.

Sememangnya meraih simpati adalah strategi pembangkang dan Anwar sejak 1998 lagi. Apa sahaja isu yang berkaitan dengan Anwar akan dijadikan modal kononnya beliau adalah mangsa konspirasi politik UMNO dan Barisan Nasional (BN).

Begitu juga apabila mereka mendakwa ceramah mereka disabotaj biarpun mereka sendiri mencari pasal masuk ke kubu kuat BN. Semua itu mereka lakukan dengan tujuan menggambarkan kepada rakyat bahawa mereka sentiasa sahaja berada dalam keadaan menjadi mangsa.

Hakikatnya dalam soal mengajak Perdana Menteri berdebat, pembangkang sudah kehabisan modal dan isu bagi menentang BN dalam pilihan raya umum akan datang.

Mereka hanya mengharapkan ceramah-ceramah yang dihadiri oleh ramai orang bagi meraih simpati dan sokongan, mereka akan gunakan kebijaksanaan bercakap untuk memutar belitkan fakta dan mengelirukan rakyat berhubung segala usaha kerajaan.

Pembangkang kini semakin terdesak dan terhimpit kerana dilanda satu demi satu isu yang memaksa mereka mengadakan ceramah bagi menunjukkan kononnya mereka berada di pihak yang betul. Pergilah ke ceramah Anwar atau pembangkang termasuk Pas, mereka tidak membentangkan apa yang boleh mereka lakukan bagi kesejahteraan rakyat dan negara jika memerintah.

Sebaliknya mereka menghabiskan banyak masa bagi menjawab isu-isu yang mereka sendiri cetuskan seperti isu sokongan kepada Israel. Isu tersebut ternyata memberi impak yang besar kepada pembangkang terutamanya Pas yang amat mengharapkan sokongan orang Melayu.

Kegagalan Pas untuk menunjukkan pendirian yang tegas dalam isu tersebut dengan menerima sahaja penjelasan Anwar ternyata akan merugikan Pas kerana orang Melayu melihat parti itu sanggup bertolak ansur dalam apa juga perkara asalkan dapat meraih kuasa bersama PKR dan DAP.

Bimbang kepada kemerosotan sokongan orang Melayu kepada pembangkang, maka Pas bersungguh-sungguh menyokong Anwar dalam apa keadaan sekali pun.

Tetapi orang Melayu sudah mulai sedar mengenai perjuangan Pas dan Anwar, malahan orang Melayu di kawasan luar bandar yang merupakan 37 peratus daripada kumpulan pengundi semakin memahami usaha kerajaan BN dalam meningkatkan taraf hidup mereka.

Oleh itu, jentera-jentera UMNO dan BN tidak perlu takut dengan strategi meraih simpati yang dilakukan oleh Anwar dan pembangkang, sebaliknya mereka perlu bergerak untuk memberi penjelasan kepada rakyat apa yang sudah dilakukan oleh kerajaan BN.

"Jelaskan kepada rakyat bagaimana BN masih boleh mentadbir negara dengan baik selepas pilihan raya umum lalu biar pun terpaksa berhadapan dengan politiking melampau daripada pembangkang.

"Terangkan kepada mereka, bagaimana kerajaan BN boleh bangunkan kawasan luar bandar dengan sekian banyak rumah dan jalan dalam keadaan tanpa majoriti dua pertiga.

"Beritahu mereka, bagaimana kerajaan masih mampu memberikan sumbangan RM500 melalui Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia, RM100 untuk pelajar sekolah dan baucer buku RM200 untuk pelajar institusi pengajian tinggi di saat-saat pembangkang siang malam menuduh BN tidak pandai menguruskan ekonomi negara," kata seorang pemimpin muda UMNO kepada penulis.

Pemimpin muda berkenaan memberi pandangan itu kerana beliau tidak mahu jentera BN dan UMNO terlalu takut kepada Anwar dan pembangkang sedangkan berbanding pembangkang yang hanya tahu menabur janji kosong dan meraih simpati, BN jauh lebih baik apabila menunaikan janji dan menyusun strategi bagi meningkatkan taraf hidup rakyat.

"Bayangkanlah bagaimana kalau BN ada majoriti dua pertiga dan mentadbir negara tanpa mainan politik kacau-bilau pembangkang, sudah pasti BN akan mampu melaksanakan semua agenda untuk rakyat lebih baik lagi," katanya.

Berdasarkan kepada hujah berkenaan maka tidak perlulah BN melayan cadangan debat atau apa sahaja desakan pembangkang yang bertujuan mengganggu kelancaran BN untuk terus melaksanakan agenda untuk rakyat.

Pembangkang tidak ada kerja lain, tugas mereka hanya mencari salah kerajaan BN, mereka ibarat berusaha mencari isu di siang hari dan bertempik di pentas-pentas ceramah di malam hari. Oleh itu tidak perlulah BN melayan politik buang masa

pembangkang itu. Kenapa perlu melayan satu pihak yang kononnya mampu mentadbir lebih baik tetapi apabila diberi kuasa memerintah beberapa negeri sudah kelam-kabut.

Sebaliknya tumpuan BN sekarang terus melaksanakan agenda transformasi yang digariskan oleh Najib bagi memastikan parti itu mampu meraih sokongan lebih besar dalam pilihan raya umum akan datang. Tidak payah melayan agenda reformasi demi meraih simpati pembangkang.

Sebaliknya tumpukan perhatian kepada usaha menunaikan janji melalui transformasi yang berteraskan kepada gagasan 1Malaysia Rakyat Didahulukan Pencapaian Diutamakan.

Pembangkang sudah hampir ke tahap muflis isu bagi membolehkan merampas Putrajaya. Mereka semakin bimbang dengan agenda dan pendekatan yang dilakukan oleh kerajaan BN dalam usaha memulihkan sokongan rakyat.

Tindakan melayan pembangkang termasuklah berdebat hanya akan menyebabkan BN masuk ke dalam perangkap pembangkang yang sememangnya mahu parti itu melayan kerenah remeh-temeh mereka agar agenda kerajaan untuk rakyat akan tergendala atau terbantut.

Sudah menjadi sikap pembangkang sejak dahulu lagi, dalam apa hal pun mereka hanya bermodalkan air liur, sebab itulah mereka mudah menabur janji, suka berceramah dan berdemonstrasi.

Ini berbeza dengan pendekatan BN yang melaksanakan segala janji dan tidak akan sesekali mencipta mimpi untuk rakyat seperti pembangkang 'membuai' penyokong-penyokong mereka berhubung impian ke Putrajaya.

Ingatkan bahawa pembangkang semakin terdesak dan tertekan, dari semasa ke semasa mereka semakin gagal untuk menunjukkan bahawa mereka jauh lebih baik daripada BN.

Pakatan mereka penuh perbezaan, tiada kesepakatan dan tiada arah tujuan, misi mereka hanya satu iaitu merampas tampuk kekuasaan. Justeru tidak perlulah jentera BN merasa gerun dengan Anwar dan kunci-kuncunya dalam pembangkang termasuklah 'pak turut setia' mereka iaitu Pas.

Tiada apa yang harus digeruni dengan pembangkang, mereka hanya tahu meraih simpati tetapi tiada visi dan misi.

Perjuangan yang ikhlas demi kesejahteraan rakyat, bangsa, agama dan negara pasti akan menumbangkan perjuangan yang berlandaskan kepada matlamat menghalalkan cara.

Tak pandai jaga kawasan punca ajak debat

KUALA LUMPUR 25 Feb. - Ketua Pergerakan Pemuda UMNO, Khairy Jamaludin mendakwa kecenderungan pembangkang untuk mengajak pemimpin Barisan Nasional (BN) berdebat adalah disebabkan mereka tidak pandai menjaga kawasan masing-masing.

Disebabkan itu, katanya, pemimpin pembangkang mengajak BN berdebat bagi mencari publisiti segera kerana menerusnya, ia mampu untuk menaikkan nama mereka.

Namun, tegas beliau, ketika ini nampak seolah-olah bagi pembangkang, debat itulah satu-satunya cara untuk menyelesaikan masalah mereka.

"Saya mahu ingatkan di sini, debat hanya merupakan satu cara berpolitik namun yang lebih penting ialah buat kerja di kawasan," katanya kepada *Mingguan Malaysia* di sini hari ini.

Beliau diminta mengulas kecenderungan pemimpin pembangkang sejak kebelakangan ini yang mahu debat diadakan di antara pemimpin mereka dan BN termasuk melibatkan Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak dan Ketua Pembangkang, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Dalam pada itu, Khairy yang bersetuju dengan budaya debat berkata, beliau juga kerap berdebat dengan pemimpin-pemimpin pembangkang walaupun di mana-mana sahaja ia diadakan.

Katanya, pemimpin UMNO juga perlu berani berdebat kerana ia penting namun kepentingan berkhidmat di kawasan adalah melebihi segala-galanya.

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I'm ready for reasonable discourse, says Najib

PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has expressed willingness to discuss political issues with any reasonable man or woman.

“As a politician in a democratic state, having some people say bad things about me is inevitable. If I can't handle this, then I've made the wrong career choice.

“That much I accept. I am happy to have a discourse on politics with any reasonable man or woman and appreciate lively political discourse,” he said in his official blog in a post titled “The Truth About Malaysia” yesterday.

Meanwhile, Merdeka Centre for Opinion Research programmes director Ibrahim Suffian said young voters want “freshness” in politics through live debates rather than personal attacks.

“A debate would enable leaders to showcase their abilities, articulate complex ideas to the layman, propose solutions and persuade people on why their coalition is the best,” he said yesterday.

The centre released a survey yesterday showing 67% of young voters between the age of 21 and 30 supported the idea of a debate between Najib and Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The peninsula-wide telephone survey of 1,022 randomly-selected voters was carried out between Feb 10 and 23.

POLITICAL DEBATES: Ambiga's call is just naive

DATUK Ambiga Sreenivasan's call to Datuk Seri Najib Razak to debate Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim shows that she has political ambitions. Until now, that was not clear.

She had always insisted that her only concern was free and fair elections in Malaysia. That was the rationale behind the Bersih rallies. She had never admitted that she harboured any political motives or that she wished to be a candidate in elections.

Obviously, such a debate -- if it ever takes place -- will be political. Therefore, she has a political agenda.

Of course, as a citizen she has every right to participate in politics and stand for elections but then, she must first come clean.

She must make her intentions known from the start, not hide them from the public. That is the honest way. She must avoid using the back door to politics. She must walk through the front door. As the saying goes, she must come with clean hands.

Having said that, I am unsure what a debate between Najib and Anwar will achieve. I am puzzled because it does not make sense.

Malaysia is not the United States where two presidential candidates debate each other and use that opportunity to expound on their theories, beliefs and philosophies.

This is so that the people can compare the two and then make an informed decision as for whom to vote. But in the case of Malaysia, Najib and Anwar are not equals.

Najib is the prime minister and leader of Barisan Nasional. Anwar is only a member of parliament and not even the official leader of Pakatan Rakyat. There is a vast difference between the two.

Even if Pakatan wins the general election, there is no certainty that Anwar will become prime minister because Pas' Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang is that party's preferred candidate.

Again, we do not have a two-party system, which means that a rank outsider (or an independent candidate) has, in theory, a chance to be elected prime minister. So, should Najib then debate with all wannabe prime ministers?

Now, even if such a debate were to take place, what could be the topics of discussion that will help voters weigh one person against the other? BN has one set of policies that it has always adhered to, but until today, Pakatan has yet to agree on a set of policies.

The parties in Pakatan -- DAP, Pas and Parti Keadilan Rakyat -- are divided over fundamental issues. Pas wants to implement hudud, DAP is opposed to it, DAP has a

Malaysian-Malaysia agenda, and PKR has its Buku Jingga, which incidentally makes no mention on how it would tackle Indian community issues.

To summarise, therefore, what basis is there for a Najib-Anwar debate?

THEY are not political equals;

THERE are no ideological issues that can be debated;

ANWAR is only the de facto leader of the opposition, not the de jure leader (in the case of Mitt Romney, the US presidential challenger, at least he was a governor and thus, had experience in running a government);

WHAT are Ambiga's credentials for calling for such a debate?; and,

ANWAR'S credentials were such that when he was in the government, he showed no sympathy for Indians or displayed no interest in their welfare.

Ambiga's call has, therefore, only exposed her political ambitions and proved that she is politically naive.

S.P.M., Kuala Lumpur

APPENDIX B
Independent Newspapers Articles

Mahasiswa tawar diri jadi penganjur debat Anwar-Najib

KUALA LUMPUR, 26 Jan: Gabungan Mahasiswa Islam SeMalaysia (Gamis) hari ini menyatakan kesediaan menjadi penganjur debat antara Perdana Menteri Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak dengan Ketua Pembangkang, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Pengerusi Majlis Politik Nasional gabungan itu, Muhammad Hafizuddin Muhamed Noor berkata, debat antara kedua-dua pemimpin itu sangat dinanti oleh rakyat apatah lagi golongan mahasiswa.

"Golongan mahasiswa sangat ternanti-nanti pendirian Datuk Seri Najib berkenaan kesediaan beliau untuk menyertai debat tersebut, Datuk Seri Anwar sudah lama menyatakan hasrat beliau.

"Mahasiswa bersedia untuk menjadi penganjur debat ini," katanya dalam satu kenyataan kepada Harakahdaily.

Beliau mengulas kajian yang dikendalikan Merdeka Center terhadap Profesional Melayu yang mahu debat antara kedua pemimpin politik tanah air itu direalisasikan.

Menurut Hafizuddin, selain kaedah terbaik meraikan perbezaan, debat juga ujarnya boleh menjadi medan penilaian bagi masyarakat khususnya anak muda untuk memilih kepimpinan yang akan menerajui tampuk pemerintahan negara kelak.

Melalui beberapa perbincangan dan 'survey' di peringkat kepimpinan mahasiswa yang dijalankan mereka, pengesyoran debat disambut baik di peringkat kampus masing-masing.

Dalam pada itu beliau berharap debat tersebut jika berjaya diadakan, hanya fokus kepada isu-isu kenegaraan yang melibatkan rakyat dan kebajikan rakyat, dan bukan perdebatan berkenaan isu peribadi.

"Justeru, pihak Gamis mengesyorkan agar mahasiswa dapat bersinergi dalam menjayakan budaya ilmiah ini andai kedua-dua pemimpin besar parti (Najib dan Anwar) bersedia untuk berhadapan antara satu sama lain dalam debat politik.

"Kami juga menolak mana-mana idea yang menyatakan idea debat adalah tidak diguna pakai di Malaysia," katanya.

Debat Anwar-Najib paling ditunggu-tunggu

KUALA LUMPUR, 20 Feb: Sekurang-kurangnya dua siri debat antara tokoh-tokoh politik tanah air yang sedang dinantikan penuh harapan oleh rakyat negara ini.

Paling ditunggu agar benar-benar menjadi realiti adalah debat antara Ketua Pembangkang, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim dengan Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Satu lagi debat yang juga menjadi penantian rakyat khususnya di Selangor adalah antara Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim dengan Timbalan Pengerusi Umno Selangor, Datuk Seri Noh Omar berhubung skandal pasir yang didakwa Noh berlaku di negeri itu.

Namun bagi debat Anwar dan Najib, penantian bukan baru, tetapi sudah berbualan bulan malah Anwar sendiri beberapa kali mengemukakan cabaran kepada Najib untuk berdebat isu-isu negara khususnya membabitkan soal ekonomi.

Sehingga kini harapan itu masih kabur apabila Najib dilihat langsung tidak mahu menyahut cabaran itu bairpun diutarakan berkali-kali.

Malah pujian juga wajar diberikan kepada kedua-dua pemimpin parti majoriti Cina iaitu Setiausaha Agung DAP, Lim Guan Eng dan Presiden MCA, Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek yang lebih terkehadapan apabila membuktikan keberanian mereka berhujah di pentas debat Sabtu lalu.

Terbaru, beberapa lagi harapan dilontarkan mahu melihat Najib selaku ketua kerajaan itu menyatakan persetujuan untuk berdebat dengan Anwar.

Naib Presiden PAS, Datuk Mahfuz Omar ketika mengulas perkara itu berkata, debat itu perlu disegerakan seelok-eloknya sebelum berlangsung Pilihan Raya Umum ke-13.

Ini kerana rakyat mahu melihat kedua-dua mereka berhujah secara berhadapan, tidak lagi masing-masing melontarkan pelbagai dakwaan antara satu sama lain di media yang menghalang mereka untuk menyoal dan menjawab secara langsung.

“Najib perlu bersedia untuk berdebat secara terbuka, bukannya berceramah ke seluruh negara tanpa berhadapan dengan Anwar.

“Melalui debatlah Najib dan Anwar boleh bertemu, Mereka boleh melontarkan buah fikiran masing-masing mengenai isu yang diketengahkan supaya memberikan kesan lebih baik kepada masyarakat,” katanya seperti dilapor media semalam.

Selain PAS, PKR juga ternyata menanti penuh harapan agar Najib menerima cabaran Anwar itu agar debat yang bersejarah antara kedua-duanya dapat direalisasikan.

“Ia merupakan kesinambungan yang paling tepat setelah debat selepas Guan Eng dan Soi Lek, “ kata Naib Presdient PKR, Nurul Izzah Anwar.

Bukan setakat parti politik sahaja, malah NGO serta persatuan mahasiswa juga turut mahu melihat idea dan hujah kedua-dua pemimpin itu di pentas debat.

Dalam satu kajian yang dikendalikan Merdeka Center, majoriti Profesional Melayu

mahu debat antara kedua pemimpin politik tanah air itu direalisasikan segera.

Malah sejak awal lagi beberapa NGO turut menyatakan kesedian menjadi penganjur debat tersebut.

Ianya termasuk pertubuhan pelajar, Gabungan Mahasiswa Islam SeMalaysia (Gamis) yang mendakwa debat adalah kaedah terbaik meraikan perbezaan, malah menjadi medan penilaian bagi masyarakat khususnya anak muda untuk memilih pemerintahan negara kelak.

Let's have Anwar-Najib debate, Saifuddin tells Ku Nan
By Shannon Teoh
February 20, 2012

PKR secretary general Datuk Saifuddin Nasution told reporters today he would reach out to Tengku Adnan to begin efforts on behalf of their respective party leaders to make the debate happen.

“I believe the statement by the secretary general of Umno and BN was not made lightly. I hope we can get this rolling. I'm ready to discuss with him, on behalf of his president, to begin efforts to see if these two leaders can take part in a debate,” the Machang MP said.

Tengku Adnan said yesterday “we are open (to participating) if there are any (challenges),” and described debates such as Saturday's clash between MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng as “healthy”.

The highly anticipated debate between the two rivals drew a full house of 800 and was screened on Astro in Mandarin and also with a Malay translation.

Umno president Najib has so far refused to take on Opposition Leader Anwar in a debate.

The PKR de facto leader has repeatedly challenged the prime minister to a public debate on national policies and the country's direction.

Anwar has said an open debate between himself and Datuk Seri Najib Razak would let voters decide for themselves if the opposition pact's policies had merit.

But Saifuddin (**picture**) noted today that Najib has said “if he debates with Anwar, Anwar will get a fever and at the Selangor BN convention, he said he was not afraid and ready.”

He added that aside from the Dr Chua-Lim debate, PKR strategic director Rafizi Ramli and Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin also went toe-to-toe in London recently.

“I gladly receive this readiness from BN leaders to debate opposition leaders which is a departure from what Umno information chief Datuk Ahmad Maslan said before, that political debates are not in our culture,” he said.

Anwar's calls for an open debate has so far been answered only once in July 2008 by then-information minister, Datuk Ahmad Shabery Cheek, an event broadcast live on national television.

Independent pollsters Merdeka Center revealed earlier this week that focus group discussions showed that most Malay professionals would like to see Anwar and Najib go toe-to-toe on policy issues.

“There appears to be a change in what the people want. They want a new culture of debate rather than smear campaigns,” Merdeka Center director Ibrahim Suffian had said.

Young Malaysians push for Najib-Anwar debate

[Stephanie Sta Maria](#) and [G Vinod](#)

| March 5, 2012

Merdeka Centre also found that live debates would help fence-sitters make up their minds.

PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak may have to concede to a live debate with Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim if he wants to capture the hearts of young voters, particularly the Malays.

A recent survey by Merdeka Centre found that 56% of 1,022 registered voters surveyed across Peninsular Malaysia supported the idea of live debates between the two leaders as a means to showcase their respective “ideas and policies to the nation”.

The survey, conducted last month, comprised 59% Malays, 32% Chinese and 9% Indians and was aimed at gauging their perceptions of current developments in the country.

A significant 67% of those in favour of live debates were below 30-years-old followed closely by the 31-40 and 41-50 age groups, both at 58%.

The survey findings also indicated that live debates would help fence-sitters make up their minds as 62% of voters are still undecided on where to cast their votes.

But the idea was given the thumbs down by 35% of respondents while 10% voiced their uncertainty.

Support was almost equal in strength in the urban and rural areas although 60% came from Pakatan Rakyat supporters compared to 48% of Barisan Nasional supporters.

The disparity of support was also noted in the three main ethnic groups with 66% of Chinese voters backing the idea followed by 54% of Malay voters and 34% of Indian voters.

The independent pollster meanwhile found that 76% of Malay voters supported the idea of regular live debates while 39% of Malay voters aged 60 and above deemed it unnecessary and “not part of our culture”.

Economic issues

Merdeka Centre’s director, Suffian Ibrahim, had said in January that its focus group discussions with Malay professionals unveiled their keenness in seeing Najib and Anwar move beyond talking about personal issues to addressing national ones.

Among the topics that voters wanted to see debated are “economic issues” at 17%, “current national issues” at 9% and “welfare of the people” and “development of the country” at 7% , respectively. Only 5% were interested in a debate on “combating corruption”.

Anwar had issued his third challenge to Najib for a public debate over national policies during his winding-up speech at the Pakatan Rakyat convention in Alor Setar on Jan 14.

He said that an open debate would enable voters to decide for themselves if the opposition's plans for the nation held merit following Barisan Nasional's criticism that they were "populist and irresponsible".

Najib however had declined by saying that political parties were more important than individuals but also stressed that he was ready to face the former in a presidential-style debate.

In January, Bernama quoted Najib as saying that he was not afraid to engage in a debate with Anwar but stressed that it would be only a waste of time as the latter had failed to deliver his electoral promises.

"I can debate him, I am not afraid, my ministers and I have all the information. Don't try to challenge me, if I were to reveal everything, someone will end up with a fever," said Najib.

Najib was today reported as saying that he was "happy to argue politics with any reasonable man or woman" but not with conspiracy theorists.

Malaysia's first live debate took place on Feb 18 between MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng but was said to have lacked bite.

Students call for Najib-Anwar debate

[G Vinod](#)

| March 6, 2012

The student movements say that only cowards will use the excuse that Malaysians are not matured enough for such debates.

PETALING JAYA: Student movements said it was time for Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak and Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim to engage in open debates on their plans for Malaysia.

Responding to a survey by Merdeka Centre, Universiti Malaya Students Council president Syahid Mohd Zaini said his movement wrote many letters to the duo to engage in a debate so that the people could assess both leaders' policies for the nation.

"All the time, only Anwar agreed to the debate. We heard nothing from Najib," he added.

A recent survey done by Merdeka Centre revealed that 56% of its 1,022 respondents wanted to see both the political heavyweights participate in live debates.

However, Bernama reported Najib as saying that he would only debate with responsible leaders and not "conspiracy theorists", referring to Anwar.

Syahid said debates were essential as Malaysians, in general, would like to know details on what both leaders planned to do for Malaysia and what they had to offer the public.

"A lot of democracies in the world have gone far in terms of debate. Malaysia needs to develop its political values instead of relying on people buttering up those in power," he said.

He also said that it was not necessary for both leaders to wait for the general election to debate as it could be done anytime when the need arose.

A cowardly excuse

On arguments that Malaysians were not matured enough for debates, Syahid bluntly said that only cowards would use that excuse to avoid a public discourse.

"We are matured enough and even rural dwellers can deliberate on issues due to wide Internet access. We need leaders who can put forward their ideas to the people transparently," said Syahid.

Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia president Syukri Razab said it was not only the students who wanted to see the debate but all Malaysians.

He also said that it was not about who was a better speaker but merely a platform for both leaders to bring forth their ideas to the table.

"For starters, such debates will take our democracy to the next level. It's becoming a need and you can't avoid it," he said.

He added that such debates need not only be confined to top politicians but also all who wished to become an elected representative, be it state assemblymen or federal parliamentarians.

Syukri also debunked the notion that Malaysians were immature for debates, saying only BN politicians resorted to such an argument.

“It’s very shallow of them to say so. What makes them think we are immature?” he asked.

He said that maturity could only be nurtured when the government allowed space for it to grow.

“With government controlled media and politics of intimidation, how can political maturity grow? Give us the space first then you’ll see our democracy grow,” he said.

PKR repeats debate offer

In another development, PKR today reiterated its offer to Najib for a debate with Anwar in the spirit of the premier’s appreciation of Malaysians’ lively political debate, as he had mentioned in his blog yesterday.

“We have offered for a debate with him in January last year on the status of the nation’s economy, corruption as well as Pakatan Rakyat’s Buku Jingga pledges. To date we have not heard anything from him,” said PKR secretary general Saifuddin Nasution in a statement today.

Saifuddin also said Najib should not be overly concerned over his opponent’s ability to debate with facts and self-restrain.

“He should not be worried over those things. He should let the people be the judge of the debate and its outcome,” he said.

PKR repeats invite for Anwar-Najib debate

By Clara Chooi

March 06, 2012

KUALA LUMPUR, March 6 — PKR today renewed its call for an Anwar-Najib debate, following the prime minister's statement yesterday that he was ready to argue politics with "reasonable" leaders.

In a statement, PKR secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution told Datuk Seri Najib Razak there was no need to fear whether his opponent could keep his emotions in check during the debate as he should have faith in the public's ability to judge fairly.

"Najib expressed worry over his opponent's ability to speak based on facts and exercise emotional restraint.

"In truth, this worry should not exist if he is confident in the ability of Malaysians to make fair judgment," the Machang MP said.

Repeating his party's invitation to Najib, Saifuddin (**picture**) said the offer was in line with the "democratic spirit" the prime minister often speaks of.

He said it was unfortunate that despite the party's repeated requests, Najib was yet to respond to the invitation.

"PKR again urges Najib to accept this debate offer... unless he does not feel the issues of the economy, our Buku Jingga pledges and policies, good governance, rise in cost of living and the mismanagement of the country are important matters to be debated," he said.

"The decision lies in Najib's hands... whether he honestly wants to allow Malaysians to hear directly the policies of Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Rakyat debated within the democratic framework," he said.

Writing in his blog yesterday, Najib had expressed his readiness to participate in a debate but stressed his opponent must be "reasonable" and not given to raising "conspiracy theories" to win the argument.

The prime minister gave a reminder that the country's diversity could easily be turned into a "fatal weakness" if political leaders choose provocation over responsibility and fail to restrain themselves during such debates.

"And it worries me that far too many who say they want to lead Malaysia are unable to restrain themselves when they are engaged in debate," he said in his blog, without naming any individual.

"For them, no story, no claim or outrageous theory, no matter how baseless or fact-free, is off-limits, even if it does massive damage to the country's reputation abroad and our domestic stability."

Najib added that "some in our country" could not resist the allure of raising conspiracy theories as such theories could absolve their promoters of responsibility for their own failures.

“Cannot win the argument or get your way? Then it is so much easier to complain that the system is fixed than it is to do the hard work of finding a better argument or humbly admitting one’s error,” he sniped, saying that conspiracy theories belong in “Jason Bourne movies” and not in rational political debates.

The federal opposition has repeatedly urged the prime minister to take on its leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in debate, arguing it would be the best platform for both men to lay out their ideas and policies to help Malaysians decide who to vote for.

According to a recent poll by Merdeka Center, most voters in the peninsula want to see regular debates between the prime minister and his political rival Anwar, suggesting that this would help them decide which party to vote for.

Debate – ‘Najib won’t have the guts’

[Teoh El Sen](#)

| March 24, 2012

A PAS leader says the prime minister is not fond of taking risks, and prefers to let others clear the path before making a 'gallant' entry.

PETALING JAYA: In the absence of his retinue of advisers and strategists to provide him with fodder, Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak will lack the courage to lock horns with Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim in a live debate.

The Barisan Nasional chairman and Umno president, according to PAS Kuala Selangor MP Dzulkefly Ahmad, was a “risk adverse person” who would not dare go to the forefront for a debate.

“I know personally that Najib is such a person. He would make sure his path is cleared by others first... only then would he make a ‘gallant’ appearance,” he told FMT.

Dzulkefly was commenting on the invitation by WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange for Najib, Anwar, and blogger Raja Petra Kamarudin to debate together “or in isolation” on Wednesday.

Anwar, who had been taunting Najib for a verbal duel for months, accepted Assange’s offer; while Raja Petra asked if both his opponents would agree to debate on the subject of Islam.

Politicians and observers FMT spoke to agreed that a Najib-Anwar debate was what everyone wanted, while Raja Petra could spice things up.

But one analyst questioned the need for a foreign entity like WikiLeaks to host it when it could be done so by local NGOs.

Such a high profile debate, said Dzulkefly, was what the electorate from all sections of society were waiting to see, though it would be “daunting” for someone like Najib, who had a lot of baggage to hide.

“Frankly, I don’t think the debate would happen. Until and unless you are really very sure you can handle questions in real time, not having to refer and resort to advisers and consultants for opinions and whatever, Najib would not dare do it,” he added.

Dzulkefly said he would like to see three wide topics being discussed, namely economic woes; the general political leadership; and the issue of race and religion.

On Raja Petra’s suggestion to debate about Islam, he said that though PAS looked at Islam from every viewpoint, it was not as essential an issue as compared to governance.

The PAS leader admitted that Anwar had the upper hand as he could be on the constant attack because he was in the opposition and need not be accountable.

“The pressure is on Najib. The more Najib is reluctant to engage, the more he is losing support and approval,” he said.

Khair: Debate needs substance

Former Selangor menteri besar Dr Mohd Khir Toyo said that he was all for a public debate between the two national top guns but cautioned on the topic of the debate.

“I think the debate culture is healthy, but we need to see the purpose behind the debate. If the purpose is to demonise certain people, then no. But if it is to explain our ideas, on what is going to happen to the country. Then any leader, even a prime minister, should do it.

“Malaysians in general, are looking for a ‘new formula’, how to stave off the threatening global economy, cope with the rising of cost of living, and how to deal with the gap between our income and cost of living becoming bigger and bigger,” he added.

Khair said leaders should “forget what happened in the past” and look forward to the nation’s challenges, which was far more important.

“A debate shouldn’t be about embarrassing each other, Malaysians are tired of attacks without new ideas, that’s what I see when I meet local leaders on the ground.

“The topic now should be: how do we save our future? The topic can’t be too wide,” he said, pointing out that Najib himself said that he would debate if it was for the betterment of the country.

“You can’t just say, I am (going to be) the prime minister I would bring down oil prices to RM1, but you must also explain what you mean, how you are going to do it. You can’t bluff the rakyat,” he added, taking a swipe at Anwar.

‘Give it serious thought, Najib’

Meanwhile, former Transparency-International Malaysia president Ramon Navaratnam appealed to Najib to give “serious thought” about debating with Anwar and Raja Petra.

“I would appeal to him to give it very serious thought, this is an opportunity for the people to understand his thoughts better. Some things would come out more clearly in a debate rather than just statements and public announcements,” he said.

Ramon said that debates would spur greater transparency and integrity in a democratic system.

“It’s a very good move, to have an open debate at the highest level. Particularly between the PM and leader of the opposition, it would enlighten the public and electorate particularly of the issues that are not discussed in the main media,” added the Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (ASLI) director.

He said that it would promote greater freedom of speech and a wider exposure to the public of the issues at hand, particularly since the general election was close.

“Too many of these important issues have been raised by bloggers like Raja Petra, but have not gotten satisfactory response from the government and even the opposition because the opposition is not fully aware of all the information in the government.

“Hence, allegations of scandals keep arising and the people feel disappointed and depressed that the clarification have not been seen to be fair, reasonable and clear. So, I would appeal to all concerned

to participate in this debate. In fact to have a whole series of discussions that would help to bring about a better understanding of our democratic process, illuminate the dark corners of ignorance on the issues of the day,” he added.

Ramon said he would also like to see less “politicking and character assassination which seem to take precedence over the more important debate on national issues.”

He said ASLI would gladly host a debate if requested.

“Why not? If not ASLI, then another group. The means is not important, but the end. It’s fine whoever initiates it, even universities. I am sure even the government can organise it. The point is can we have discussions, that is open, free and fair? We are seeking the truth,” he added.

‘Wikileaks’ marketing campaign’

Independent political commentator Khoo Kay Peng said that he was puzzled by the involvement of Wikileaks, which was “not even a proper organisation”, in arranging a debate.

“I don’t really know what the role of Wikileaks in this is. To me, it’s odd. It’s definitely a marketing campaign of Assange. It doesn’t make sense. Is it because no other country would accept this, so they are looking as far as a third world country?” he asked.

Khoo said a local debate should be organised locally – by local NGOs.

“In the US, you won’t see presidential hopefuls debating in another country. Similarly, here we have one PM and one PM wannabe. If you hold it in Malaysia and RPK is the moderator, it would be more ‘legitimate’, like how the (MCA president) Dr Chua Soi Lek- (DAP secretary-general) Lim Guan Eng debate was done. So that local people, including the media, so on, can be involved,” he said.

“It would be an embarrassment to Malaysia if (the Wikileaks debate) happens, not on a formal platform. If it is conducted by ASLI or even done in Parliament, then it is better. There is some semblance of respect,” he added.

Khoo, who stressed that he would welcome a debate if it really happened, said Najib was most likely to ignore Anwar again.

“Why would Najib give Anwar airtime? On a live debate that you can’t moderate? Why would Najib want to risk something like that? Shout till you are cold (Anwar), asking for a debate, it won’t happen,” he said.

Khoo said there were many issues the Barisan Nasional government needed to have closure on, and there was a lingering “terrible perception, as bad as (former premier Abdullah Ahmad) Badawi.”

“As the incumbent, you would definitely be on the defensive. The opposition can exploit everything and Anwar would be on the attack, and it would be Najib needing to explain. This is also because the sentiment is that even if there are mistakes by Pakatan Rakyat, its not as big as BN’s,” he added.

Asked if a debate would have any impact on voters, Khoo said it would if one party came out with a major upper hand.

“If Lim Guan Eng had a upperhand against Chua Soi Lek, DAP would keep repeating the recordings of the debate (and sway voters). But Lim did not,” he said.

A recent survey done by Merdeka Centre revealed that 56% of its 1,022 respondents wanted to see both the political heavyweights participate in live debates.

However, Bernama later reported Najib as saying that he would only debate with responsible leaders and not “conspiracy theorists”.

Public debate the true test of a leader

[Joe Fernandez](#)

| March 29, 2012

A face-off between the prime minister and opposition leader will also foretell the results of the 13th general election

Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak now has his back to the wall, having painted himself into a corner, if not cornered. It will take forever for the paint to dry and he doesn't have the luxury of time in politics.

Najib is not getting off scott-free on a public debate which is a matter of public interest, public concern and high policy.

In short, no matter how much he dislikes it, Najib would sooner rather than later have to accept Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim's challenge to a face-off in public. Both men have the locus standi to debate each other.

It will be high noon all over again.

The international media will all be there, thanks to Julian Assange of the whistleblower site WikiLeaks which has offered to host the debate in Asia.

The debate is not the place for Najib to raise the issue of Anwar's sexual preferences, if any. No doubt, the focus of the debate would be on the opposing political platforms of Pakatan Rakyat and Umno.

Umno believes in the politics of what separates us as a people so that it can twist and turn everything into a racial issue to pit the people against each other.

This politics of race is being allegedly stage-managed through the Biro Tata Negara (BTN) to scare the Malay-speaking community into gathering under one political platform, that is, Umno so that the elite can live it up like latter-day oil sheikhs at the expense of the nation.

The politics of distraction and disruption facilitates the politics of race which, in turn, camouflages the virtual plunder of the public treasury under the guise of the politics of development.

BN fiction

The Barisan Nasional (BN) helps its master (Umno) in return for some crumbs from the main table thrown on the scrap heap.

The fiction is that BN has a formula, concept and spirit. The "formula" is seat-sharing, the "concept" is power-sharing, and the "spirit" is arriving at decisions by consensus and compromises.

The stark reality is that Umno through BN denies the grassroots majority meaningful participation in the democratic experiment by endorsing elite "power-sharing" through distribution of seats and forming a coalition before polls.

To ensure that the discredited non-Malay leaders come in at the ballot box and window-dress the Cabinet, barely Malay-majority seats are handed out to them like lollipops. This is something that the opposition alliance refuses to do.

BN's circumvention of the democratic process, aided for long by the usurpation of the organs of the state by the powers-that-be, is at the heart of the wholesale, total and complete corruption of the body politics and nation and one which has no parallel in world history.

BN has also billed itself as a "Winners Club" where opposition members were automatically invited to join, with a little persuasion from the Special Branch amidst threats of preventive detention, but only if they won any seats in Parliament or the state assemblies.

The idea is to do away with the opposition, if possible, and virtually foster a one-party state to erode the doctrine of separation of powers, the independence of the Judiciary and the sanctity of Parliament, and thereby avoid checks-and-balances, openness, transparency and public accountability. This paves the way for conflict of interest, and abuse of power.

There are other areas of concern: the vote-linked dependency syndrome foisted on the rural people and urban poor by Umno through the subsidy regime and hand-outs of fertiliser, zinc sheets, building materials, 1Malaysia RM200 book vouchers, RM100 one-off payments to school students, RM500 one-off payments to poor households and the like. This is like bribing people with their own money for votes.

Budget discipline

Another major area of concern is the high national debt burden linked to the Umno gravy train and increased public spending to artificially boost economic growth rates. In no nation in history have such approaches worked. The future generations are being mortgaged long before they arrive.

The only solution to the problem of long-term and sustainable growth, as mooted by the opposition alliance, is budget discipline and competitiveness.

The opposition's stand on the proposed public debate is simple: its politics of equality vs Umno's and, by extension, BN's politics of race.

Hence, the opposition wants to stress that regime change must be followed by system change.

Evidently, Umno has to go and go soon together with the BN.

Still, there are factions within Umno but not from BN, which can be incorporated within the opposition alliance when it seizes the reins of power in Putrajaya. One such faction is Amanah led by veteran Umno politician Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

Najib and his predecessor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi are the other Umno warlords who may move heaven and hell to buy political protection when a new government takes over Putrajaya. In return, they would have to sacrifice Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Daim

Zainuddin and Co. No doubt these aspects will feature on the sidelines of the public debate when and if it materialises.

Najib, again, will try his level best to avoid the public debate since there's no way that he can be expected to defend the current rickety system running the country.

The people will have a golden opportunity to take the true measure of the debaters by the time it ends.

Najib will have an opportunity to mouth all the nonsense he spews during his so-called meet-the-people foam sessions, held without police permits, and where the entire government machinery and mainstream media are abused for political party purposes.

The debate will foretell the 13th general election results and dispel Najib's notion – repeated during his handout of gas cylinders and mattresses to the vulnerable in Hulu Langat recently – that the people were cheated during the 2008 general election by the opposition alliance.

Najib cannot keep avoiding the great debate forever.