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FOR OPINION RESEARCH

News Release
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PM's approval rating remains stable - survey

BANGI – The prime minister's approval rating remained stable in positive territory despite a marginal decline as found in the opinion poll released by Merdeka Center for Opinion Research today.

69% of Malaysians said that they were satisfied with Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak's performance in this survey which is slightly lower compared to 72% recorded in May 2010. Within the 69% who approved, 22% reported "very satisfied" and the remaining 47% reported "somewhat satisfied" with the performance of the prime minister. Broken down into ethnic groups, the survey found 74% of Malays, 54% of Chinese and 85% of Indian respondents expressed satisfaction. Overall, the survey found that the number of people dissatisfied with his performance increased slightly to 24% from 21% in May 2010.

From the survey, we note that the slightly reduced approval ratings may be due to public reactions towards the reductions in government subsidies for items such as fuel and sugar which took place during the survey period.

Majority say country headed in the right direction

54% of the electorate felt that the country was headed in the right direction up slightly from 52% in May 2010 on the back of the perception that the Malaysian economy continued to perform reasonably well, that the nation's leaders were more dynamic and increased visibility of development initiatives.

With respect to issues, the survey found that the public's topmost concern remained the economy at 24% and followed by social problems at 16%. Worries over race related matters ranked third at 11% of the public mindscape. Other significant worries include political instability and crime at 8% each, followed by corruption at 7%.

Public sentiment on the economy remains mixed

53% of voters felt that current economic conditions was favorable, an improvement from the 47% recorded in May 2010. Three of the four indicators used to track public sentiments on the economy found marked improvements: satisfaction with personal income levels increased 6% to 52%, job opportunities increased 8% to 48%; and satisfaction with business opportunities rose 6% to 50%. Only satisfaction with prices of consumer goods and services continued to decline with only 21% of respondents remarking it as "favorable".

The positive feelings expressed by voters over economic conditions at present did not extend to the future. Voter optimism in the economy for the year ahead declined 6% with 47% saying that the economy will be better in one years' time compared to 53% who felt positive in May 2010. The figure among ethnic Chinese voters expressing optimism over the economy decreased to 26% compared to 37% in May 2010.

Lukewarm confidence in the Economic Transformation Plan

Public awareness Economic Transformation Plan unveiled by the government was moderate with 48% of voters reporting awareness of the initiative. However, only 16% reported some level of knowledge and comprehension of the plan and its goals. Confidence in the ETP goals was lukewarm, overall 46% reported confidence, within which, only 9% said they were "very confident" that the ETP will "propel Malaysia into becoming a developed nation".

With respect to the National Key Result Areas (NKRA), the survey found that voter sentiments showed a mixed set of movement over the past one-half year as follows:

NKRA	Dec 2010 % satisfied	May 2010 % satisfied	Variance
Fighting corruption	35	36	-1%
Reducing crime	47	41	+6%
Improve rural living standards	55	52	+3%
Improve public transport	55	56	-1%
Providing assistance	58	54	+4%
Improve quality of education	62	63	-1%

The Peninsular Malaysia wide telephone survey of 1005 randomly selected Malaysian registered voters aged 21 and above was carried out between 30th November and 11th December 2010. Respondents were selected using the random, stratified sampling method and structured along the national electorate profile and specifically proportional to gender, ethnicity, age groups and state of residence.

View top-line, respondents' profile and other findings at www.merdeka.org

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About Merdeka Center for Opinion Research

Merdeka Center for Opinion Research is an independent, non-partisan organization focused on public opinion research and socio-economic analysis. Merdeka's mission is to act as a bridge between ordinary Malaysians and other stakeholders with the leading members of the nation – by providing dispassionate presentation of public opinion survey results, analysis and position papers.

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