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Najib: National service committee to meet next month

PEKAN, Fri. - The committee formed to oversee the implementation of the proposed national service will hold its first meeting next month, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said.

He said the committee hoped to discuss and draw up the necessary legislation required to implement the service.

"For a start, I will be meeting representatives from organisations which participated in a seminar on patriotism held recently," Najib, who is also MP for Pekan, said after opening Risda's meet-the-people session at Kampung Ganchong near here today.

The meeting, scheduled for next week, will be part of discussions that would be held with various groups to get feedback on its implementation.

Last Saturday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he would propose to the Cabinet to implement national service to inculcate the spirit of patriotism among the people of the various races.

Following this, Najib said the Cabinet has agreed to form a committee to realise Dr Mahathir's proposal.

The committee, to be chaired by him, will include Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, Ministers in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim and Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad, Deputy Defence Minister Datuk Shafie Apdal and Deputy Home Ministers Datuk Zainal Abidin Zin and Datuk Chor Chee Heung.

Najib said an average of 450,000 youths who turned 18 yearly would have to be absorbed if participation for the service is made compulsory.