

Najib meets Umno division leaders ahead of polls
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak starts his meet with the Umno division leaders at Kuala Lumpur this morning with the Kedah contingent kicking off the proceedings. Arriving at PWTC at 8.30am sharp, he is expected to spend 30 minutes meeting groups from each state, speaking to 118 division leaders in total.

Only the party division leaders who hold cabinet positions, are deputy ministers, MBs and MPs, as well as those from Sabah and Sarawak are exempted from the meet.

While Najib has met the division chiefs from Sarawak during his recent trip there, he is expected to hold a similar meet with those from Sabah in their own state. Just last month, he organised a similar special meeting with the BN members of parliament, also at PWTC.

While many have speculated that this is in preparation for the oft-talked about snap general elections, Najib himself had previously denied it, saying that it was part of his 'political transformation plan'.

However, there was some anxiety among a number of Umno warlords, who said that the premier paid extra attention in the states controlled by Pakatan Rakyat.

Kedah Umno told to close ranks

Incidentally, it is the division leaders from the Pakatan Rakyat states who were first in line to meet Najib.

Kedah liaison committee chairperson Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah said that Najib had reminded the division leaders to close ranks and to put a lid on the infighting that's been happening in the party in the state.

"For example, Najib had previously told us in his speech previously that the problems in the Sungai Petani division should be solved," said Ahmad Bashah.

The Penang Umno deputy chief Musa Sheikh Fadzir also said that Najib had asked the delegates about the welfare of the people in the state.

"He told us to focus on winning hearts and minds of the Penangites," he told reporters.

Winnable candidates

While the messages to the division leaders may differ, there was a recurring theme to Najib's clarion call - fielding winnable candidates, according to several of the division leaders.

Selangor Umno information chief Abdul Shukur Idrus said that Najib had told the state delegates to identify potential candidates, no matter who they are.

"He said he doesn't care if they are from Umno, MCA or MIC, as long as they can win the seat," he said.

Picking a candidate is sometimes a divisive process for political parties, especially when there are warring factions within the division.

Moreover, top leaders such as division chiefs have traditionally claim the right to contest

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