

**CM's exit plan based on understanding, says PM**  
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The prime minister has maintained that a transition plan is imminent for Sarawak's leadership, but refused to divulge the details.

He also denied that Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud has become a liability to BN, stressing that the relationship between the federal and state governments is still strong.

Najib was asked to elaborate on his announcement last night that Taib, who has held office for 30 years, will step down after the state polls.

"There is (an) understanding, we'll reveal that when the time comes, but the transition is there," he said when asked if there is a specific exit plan for Taib.

"The most important thing is to ensure a very smooth transition. We cannot simply jump into making (a) quick solution. Change in the leadership requires proper handling so there will be no problem after that."

Pressed further whether BN has identified Taib's successor, Najib played his cards close to his chest.

"We have the understanding. We'll come to that later," he said, after visiting the Sri Aman hospital this afternoon.

Opposition leaders have been quick to deride the announcement, pointing out that Taib had made similar announcements before but remains firmly glued to the state's top seat.

On the opposition's campaign strategy to repeat the notion used in the Sibuluan by-election that 'a vote to BN equals a vote for Taib', Najib did not answer directly but stressed that electing a government different from BN would complicate the development of Sarawak.

"Through the implementation of nation key result areas (NKRA) over the past one and a half years, many projects have been implemented in rural areas. I'm determined to realise the agenda of rural development, that's why we need the people's mandate."

During his 30-minute visit to the hospital, Najib expanded his election goodies list, announcing a plan to build a RM200 million hospital with 108 beds. Construction will begin this year and be completed in two years.

The announcement is seen as a move to quell the opposition's campaign here that has hinged on the highly dilapidated Sri Aman hospital, constructed during the British colonial era.

The people of Sri Aman have been promised a new hospital since the 1990s. Land was bought but construction did not take off because the land was too swampy, but also many felt that mismanagement and bribery were involved.

The hospital has no specialists or a general surgeon and lacks an intensive care unit, as well as equipment such as a CT scan. Patients have to endure a three-hour bumpy ride to

Kuching if they need such facilities.

Health Minister Liow Tiong Lai, during a previous visit to Sri Aman, had announced that the new hospital would be constructed in 2013 under the 10th Malaysia Plan. Najib's visit today has sped up the process.

He also announced that the Health Ministry will look into the possibility of stationing one or two specialists at the hospital.

After the visit, Najib proceeded to the car park opposite the hospital to shake hands with thousands of members of the public, most of them wearing BN t-shirts and caps.

He gave a short speech, repeating the announcement on the construction of a new hospital.

Najib then led the crowd in chanting the slogans '1Malaysia', 'Hidup BN' and 'Menang BN' three times, after which he left the venue in a white Mercedes.

### **Al Kitab matter 'resolved'**

During the press conference, Najib said the support for BN remains strong, although the coalition needs to double its efforts because this is a "tough fight".

Asked to comment on the fact that PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim has been raising issues surrounding Al Kitab on the hustings, Najib would only say that the matter has been resolved and should not become an issue.

He reiterated that the 10-point announcement by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Idris Jala, reached in consensus with the Christian community, had obtained his consent.

"The decision can be used continuously," he added.

Najib was also asked about police investigations into the sex video scandal.

He said the public should have confidence in the police and that he leaves the case to the police to take any action required.

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