

Hadi hugs preacher Zakir, Najib shakes his hand
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Umno president and Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak as well as PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang met with controversial Muslim preacher Zakir Naik ahead of his lecture in Kuala Lumpur this afternoon.

Najib met with Zakir at a breakfast meeting at the PM's residence, while Hadi met Zakir at an undisclosed venue in Putrajaya.

"It is my hope that Zakir can tell the world that Malaysia is a moderate country which is always encouraging Muslim unity," Najib said in a Facebook posting.

He also uploaded a picture of him shaking hands with the Zakir, who is dressed in a suit.

PAS meanwhile uploaded a picture of Hadi embracing Zakir in what they called a "historic meeting" of their own in Putrajaya.

The meeting is part of the Indian national preacher's Malaysia tour from April 15 - 18, PAS said in a Facebook post.

Zakir, whom the Agong awarded 'tokoh maal hijrah' in 2013, courted controversy when inspector-general of police (IGP) Khalid Abu Bakar ordered the cancellation of the Malacca and Kuala Lumpur lectures, citing a threat to public peace.

Hindu groups had lodged police reports against the lecture, saying that Zakir had previously made slanderous comments against other religions.

Khalid retracted the ban on the Kuala Lumpur event, while Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi overturned the IGP's decision on the Malacca lecture.

However, the topic of Zakir's Malacca lecture has been changed from comparisons with Hinduism, to women's rights in Islam.