

Najib: Take Umno-PAS merger step by step
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Any discussion pertaining to Malay unity should be in harmony with efforts to strengthen national unity, said Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today.
MCPX

najib tun razak 01"Discussions on Malay or Muslim unity should not be mutually exclusive," he was quoted by Bernama as telling Malaysian journalists in Zambia.

He was asked to comment on a suggestion by PAS spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat that Umno and PAS be dissolved and a new party be formed to unite the Malays.

The PAS leader said the new party must be based on Islam.

However, Najib said: "I think we should go step by step. We shouldn't run before we can walk."

He said it would be good for both sides to discuss issues affecting the Muslim community in Malaysia with a view to safeguarding their interests.

Such a move, he said, should not only contribute to Muslim unity but also national unity as a whole, reflecting the spirit of racial tolerance that Malaysia was known for all this while.

To another question, Najib said Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi felt that it was important for his deputy to further develop linkages on the international stage, hence his presence in Lusaka, Zambia.

He said Abdullah was focusing on addressing domestic issues which the government was concerned about ahead of Umno's leadership transition.

According to the transition plan, Abdullah, who is Umno president, would hand over the party's leadership to Najib in June 2010.

Don't be obsessed with pacts

ong tee keatIn another development, MCA vice-president Ong Tee Keat advised candidates vying for top party posts not to be obsessed with forming pacts as it could create disharmony among members.

Instead, he said, the delegates should be given a free hand to decide on the party's leadership line-up through the voting process.

"What we want is a MCA team, not an individual team.

"If we are overly obsessed with pacts or endorsed lists or whatever we want to call them, this can precipitate some kind of disharmony among members," he was quoted as saying by Bernama.

Ong, who is eyeing the MCA presidency, was asked to comment on the existence of pacts among candidates in the run up to the party's elections in October.

"Why can't we just leave it to the delegates to decide and exercise their rights and wisdom?" he asked.

Previously, Ong had announced that he would run the race for the president's posts without forming pacts or alliances with other candidates.

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