

Najib: Permatang Pauh tough for BN
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Barisan Nasional expects a tough time in its bid to defeat Anwar Ibrahim in the forthcoming Permatang Pauh by-election, said Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

"We have to be realistic. Its going to be a tough constituency, but we'll do our best," Najib told a press conference after a function in Kuala Lumpur today.

najib hilton hotel pc 010808 03Najib and Anwar have been involved in a protracted political fued which is bound to heat up as the deputy premier is most likely going to lead Barisan's campaign on the PKR leader's home turf.

Traditionally the deputy premier will head BN's election campaigns in all by-elections.

"Anything can happen in a by-election," said Najib, adding that Anwar had obviously stacked the odds in his favour by contesting in his former constituency.

Both Najib and Anwar are self-declared prime minister hopefuls but both are dogged by criminal allegations - which both typically reject as being political assassinations.

Najib said that Anwar was using the by-election instead of availing other channels to expunge his name from sodomy allegations made by a former aide.

"Anwar has decided to take it to the people (despite) having the opportunity to clear his name using the processes available to him. The accusations were made by his staff and not the government," he said.

He added that Barisan leadership would be meeting soon to decide on a candidate.

Price drop?

najib hilton hotel pc 010808 01In another development, Najib said that the government may be adjusting fuel retail prices in view of falling world crude oil prices.

"There was discussion about this at the last Cabinet meeting. I was not present. If the trend continues downward, it is only right that it is reflected in the domestic prices," he said.

He reiterated the government's position that it wishes to keep fuel prices 30 percent lower than market prices but refused to put a time frame on when a decision can be made.

"We'll see what is the decision (but) it has to depend on market conditions. Certainly there is a desire for us to reflect the current market situation," he added.