

**Najib cancels US trip**  
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Deputy Prime Minister and newly appointed Finance Minister Najib Abdul Razak has cancelled his trip to New York, where he was due to make his maiden speech to an United Nations assembly.

An officer in his ministry told Malaysiakini that Najib wanted to focus on his new duties in the Finance Ministry, which he took over from his boss Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi late last week.

According to Bernama calendar of daily events, the 61-year old is due to hold a press conference at the Finance Ministry at 3 pm tomorrow.

No further details were given as to the topic for the press conference.

A statement issued by his office said the cancellation was approved by Abdullah.

"The decision is due to the current global economic situation which requires the deputy prime minister's attention to ensure the country's economy stays strong," the statement said.

"In addition to that, he was just appointed as the finance minister on Sept 17. He will need more time to attend to briefings on the current economic situation by various agencies and departments under the finance ministry."

Najib's speech, due to be delivered by Foreign Minister Rais Yatim, will touch on the country's sovereignty, the food crisis and the recent piracy incidents.

### **All eyes on Najib**

Najib, the eldest son of Malaysia's second premier Abdul Razak, is at the centre of a political storm brewing within his Umno party.

While he has pledged loyalty to Abdullah, who wants to retain the Umno presidency, other party leaders have been urging him to break away and go for the top post with cabinet colleague Muhyiddin Yassin in tow as his number two.

Najib's previous cancellation of a trip to the Middle East late last week had spurred speculation of rising political uncertainty in the country.

He was due to fly off to the United States tonight - where he had been scheduled to meet foreign fund managers and Malaysian students during the trip which was due to take place from Sept 25 to Oct 1.

He was to return only on the third day of Hari Raya - which begins on either Oct 1 or 2 - after his umrah (minor haj) in Mecca.

Speculations are rife that Najib canceled his trip because Umno is about to kick off its crucial divisional meetings beginning Oct 9 where nominations are made for top party posts.

Both Abdullah and Najib have vowed to defend their respective posts as president and deputy president at the Umno general assembly in December.

However, the party grassroots are clamouring for Najib to replace his boss much earlier than June 2010, a date which had been agreed to by the two leaders.

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