

Najib: I won't intervene in MCA crisis
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In an surprising about-turn, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, today turned down MCA's request for him to intervene to help solve the party's ongoing crisis.

"Most MCA members do not want Umno to interfere," said Najib, who is also Barisan Nasional chairperson and Umno president.

Najib spoke to reporters after chairing Umno's supreme council meeting at the Umno headquarters in Kuala Lumpur today.

Earlier, MCA vice-president Kong Cho Ha believed that issues in MCA could be resolved if the prime minister stepped in to offer advice.

Kong said Najib (*left*) expressed 'concern' over the internal issues in MCA and believed his advice could ease tensions between the two rival parties.

"So I thought the BN chairperson can help by advising all those involved for BN's sake," Kong told reporters.

Najib had also said that he would not interfere in MCA's sacking of its deputy president Dr Chua Soi Lek unless he was invited to be the mediator. <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/111558>

The turmoil in MCA erupted when Chua was sacked on Aug 26 by the party's disciplinary board because of his 2007 sex video scandal.

Quota to be abolished

On another matter, Najib said the Umno supreme council meeting today has given a green light for the party quota system to be abolished.

According to him, that the change in the party system is needed so that it could prevent money politics and make the election process to be more transparent.

"This also shows that Umno is determined to be inclusive to all the (party members) and be democratic," he said.

However, he said, the party has yet to make a final decision in terms of logistic, as in how many delegates would be eligible to vote for the party's top posts.

"We haven't decided whether we would open up the election process as wide as possible or just limit it to a certain number of delegates.

"We know the number of the delegates would increase compared to just 2,500 delegates as been the practice," said Najib.

Vice-president Hishammuddin Hussein, who is also the chairperson of constitutional amendments committee said up to 650,000 delegates would be eligible to vote. With this, he said, the party will hold a political bureau meeting after Hari Raya so the matter would be finalised and tabled at the Umno extraordinary general meeting on Oct 13.

He also said the party will not block the nominees from contesting for the party's top posts

as it would give priority to "their freedom".

"But they still need to be in line with the party's struggle and objectives besides having experience (for their candidacy)."

Najib also refused to say if the party would endorse former Negeri Sembilan menteri besar Isa Samad as the candidate for the upcoming Bagan Pinang by-election.

"We don't have the practice of announcing the candidate after Umno supreme council meeting," he said with a laugh.

Isa would be a controversial candidate as he was suspended and stripped of his vice-president post in 2005 for involvement in vote buying. He ended his three-year suspension last year.

The Bagan Pinang state seat fell vacant following the death of the incumbent assemblyperson Azman Mohamad Noor, 54, from the BN, on Sept 4.

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