

Najib: BN council will decide on new members
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The Barisan Nasional supreme council will decide on applications by political parties wishing to be a component of the ruling coalition, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said today.

"The inclusion of political parties into the BN will depend on the supreme council. It is up to the BN supreme council to allow or disallow a party into the fold," he told reporters after chairing the cabinet committee meeting on the upliftment of Indians at his office today.

Najib, who is also the BN chief, said this when asked if new parties being set-up lately would be allowed to join the ruling BN.

He also said that the mushrooming of political parties, especially Indian parties, was not an issue but "what is important is that they support the BN government".

"The (Indian) community is going through a process of rejuvenation. I see it as a transition period. These political parties will have to be set up and then they have to concretise their position in the community," he added.

Over the last few months at least three Indian-based political parties have been formed but only one had received approval from the Registrar of Societies.

The three parties are the Human Rights Party of Malaysia, the Hindu Rights Action Front and Makkal Sakti. Makkal Sakti had received the government's endorsement to operate as a political party while the other two have yet to receive the green light.

US sees Malaysia as a model nation

On his meeting with United States Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg at his office this morning, Najib said Steinberg spoke on issues pertaining to nuclear non-proliferation, human trafficking, terrorism, trade and investment.

"They (the US) want to have productive relations with Malaysia. They regard Malaysia as a model nation. They also take note that we are a progressive Islamic state.

"They hope we can engage with countries for greater inter-faith dialogues," the prime minister said when asked of his meeting with Steinberg.

Steinberg, accompanied by senior officials of the State Department, Defence Department and Directorate of National Intelligence, is on a two-day visit to Kuala Lumpur starting yesterday.

- *Bernama*

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