

Najib to meet Taib over his position
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KUALA LUMPUR – The Prime Minister will meet with Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) president Abdul Taib Mahmud over his intention to pull out of politics.

Najib Abdul Razak, who is also Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman, said any decision made must be based on the spirit of friendship between BN and PBB.

He said PBB, as a loyal friend of BN, had contributed a lot to BN's success and was still the pillar of the BN government in Sarawak.

"I will have a heart-to-heart talk with the Sarawak Chief Minister before any decision is made," he told a news conference after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting here Friday.

Recently, the 74-year-old Taib who is the longest-serving chief minister after 29 years since March 26, 1981, said he could not decide whether to step down as the matter had to be discussed and approved by the top BN leadership.

Taib who is PBB president since 1981 and is also Sarawak BN chairman, was reported as saying that he had wanted to withdraw from politics in 2006 but many in the party wanted him to stay on and he decided not to retire then.

On another subject, Najib said it was up to the Selangor religious authority whether to take action against the Surau Al-Huda committee in Kajang Sentral for allegedly having invited a non-Muslim politician to hold a function and deliver a talk in the prayer hall of the surau last Sunday.

"If it was against the religious authority's ruling and had desecrated Islam and so on, we ask that they take action," he said.

Newspapers and a number of blogs have carried pictures of Serdang MP Teo Nie Ching from the DAP, entering the prayer area of the surau for a function to hand over aid last Sunday.

The Selangor Islamic Religious Council (Mais) later send a warning notice to Teo.

Mais chairman Mohamad Adzib Mohd Isa in a statement Friday that Teo's action had caused the Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah to get upset and angry to the extent of ordering Mais to take immediate and stern action against the management of the surau.

Hence, Mohamad Adzib said Mais had decided to take over the management of the surau with immediate effect.

"Mais also wants to remind all non-Muslim politicians not to commit such offence, to be sensitive to the feelings of Muslims, and show respect to the Sultan's decree to uphold the sanctity of mosques and surau in Selangor," he said.

On opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim's claim that Umno was the cause of the quarrel over the issue of hudud law between PAS and DAP, Najib said Umno was not involved and that it was a baseless accusation.

"It's the usual thing with the opposition, whatever happens between them, Umno will be blamed. We don't know anything....but they will just blame us.

"Actually, their opposing stands on basic and fundamental issues has made the opposition pact fragile...the people don't see this because they (PAS and DAP) are in the opposition."

Najib said he could not see how the two parties could be honest with each other if they held conflicting views on such important issues as the country's direction.

He said PAS was still committed to the Islamic state concept although the debate on the definition of an Islamic state was still open, but DAP was strongly opposed to the idea.

"This is a serious matter which the people should not view lightly," he said in a Bernama report.

Recently, there was a spat between PAS' spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat and DAP national chairman Karpal Singh over PAS' proposal on implementing hudud law in the country if the opposition pact can form the next federal government.

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