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'Govt to gather evidence'

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JUSTICE: PM reacts to sabotage claims that had gone viral two days ago

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THOSE looking to sabotage the country's economy will be brought to justice if there is any truth to such allegations, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said yesterday.

"We must first gather evidence on what is alleged against them. We hope the relevant government bodies will take the necessary action (to address the matter)," Najib said yesterday after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting.

He was commenting on claims in social media that some individuals had employed measures to bet against the ringgit to crash the currency. It was alleged the move to short the position of the ringgit was made for personal monetary gain.

The claims, which had gone viral over the past two days, also linked the alleged sabotage with attempts to weaken the government.

The ringgit had hit an all-time low in almost six years.

On Thursday, Bloomberg reported that the ringgit fell 0.4 per cent to 3.6340 per US dollar as of 10.08am (Malaysian time).

Najib said the government had employed mitigation efforts and revised the 2015 Budget to more realistic levels, as the budget had earlier been made on the assumption that oil prices stood at US\$100 (RM364) per barrel.

Despite the setbacks, Najib remained confident that the country



Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Razak with his deputy Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin (left) and Umno treasurer-general Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah (right) before the start of the supreme council meeting at the Umno headquarters at the Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Pic by Aizuddin Saad

was on the right track to chart economic growth, as reflected by Moody's Investors Service's positive rating on the country's economic performance.

He said the country was not facing an economic crisis but was affected by factors beyond its control, such as the plunge in oil price.

"We can still be proud of our economic achievements, despite the challenges before us. Moody's has given a positive outlook to our overall economic management, which means that we are on the right track," said Najib.

On Umno's online membership drive launched on Dec 18, Najib said it had received almost 5,000 applications and some 3,000 had been processed. He said about 2,000 applications, however, were not complete and needed cross-

checking by the National Registration Department.

"The drive is seeing a positive response. We hope that the numbers will keep increasing."

Najib said Umno's supreme council agreed that party branches meet from March 13 to May 2, while divisional meetings be held from July 27 to Aug 31, prior to party's assembly at the end of the year.

He also expressed gratitude to all Umno members for assisting in flood relief efforts and assured works to address issues in the aftermath would continue.

On the MIC crisis, Najib said he and his deputy, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, would formulate plans to resolve the party's problem.

MIC is facing de-registration following discrepancies in its 2013 party polls.

Najib said as an important com-

ponent of Barisan Nasional, MIC should emerge stronger to bolster the coalition.

Prior to the formulation of solutions to the issue, Najib, who is also BN chairman, said he had urged MIC president Datuk Seri G. Palanivel and his No.2, Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam to hold a truce to facilitate reconciliation works.

"MIC has agreed to my recommendation to observe a moratorium. Meanwhile, my deputy (Muhyiddin) and I will brainstorm formulas to resolve the crisis.

"The party is an important component of the coalition. We need a solid front from MIC, which can be of service to BN in all aspects."

On whether any of the solutions would be a recommendation for Palanivel to step down, Najib said: "We will see which formula works best to solve the problem."