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Unity takes priority, says Najib

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KUALA LUMPUR: One of the main reasons leading to Umno's decision not to contest the Chempaka by-election is out of respect for the late Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who is also Umno president, revealed this in a tweet posted yesterday.

"I would also like to stress the importance of maintaining and strengthening unity among the peo-

ple as also another factor in the decision not to contest," he said.

Najib reiterated the Barisan Nasional government's commitment to pursuing flood relief efforts in Kelantan, which had been cited as a priority instead of contesting the by-election.

Najib had, on Wednesday, announced a collective decision by the Umno supreme council to sit out the by-election.

The Chempaka state seat fell vacant following the death of Pas spiritual leader Nik Aziz on Feb 12.

Nik Aziz had held the Chempaka state seat for five terms. Several Umno leaders had called for the party not to contest the by-election as a mark of respect to him.

The Election Commission had set nomination on March 10, early voting on March 18 and the by-election on March 22.