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| Newspaper | The Star |
| Date | 28 May 2015 |



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PETALING JAYA Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak is hitting the road for a nationwide tour to deliver a message that he is still in charge and not bowing to pressure to step down.

The Prime Minister returned from Japan on Tuesday night to a week packed with meetings and events that will also see him going to Perlis on Saturday to meet Umno leaders, have lunch at Dewan Wawasan 2020 in Kangar and pre-

sent awards to the "Desa Sejahtera Malaysia" winners in Kampung Kurong Tengar in Kuala Perlis.

In the past weeks, Najib attended several other large gatherings. He was in Kota Belud, Tawau, Johor Baru, Gopeng and his "base" Pekan where he enjoyed the attention of big crowds.

At previous events, Najib did not only explain Government policies, but made use of the platform to explain issues where he has come under Ore - BRIM, Tabung Haji's controversial purchase of IMDB

land in Tun Razak Exchange, his leadership and demands for his resignation.

A Johor Umno leader said the good turnout at the Prime Minister's function could be an indication that he was still popular among many despite former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's accusations.

"Or perhaps they came to hear from the man himself explain what had happened. Whatever it is, Najib should stand up and defend himself. He should tell his side of the

story. But he must also convince the people that he is committed to resolve issues that have been raised," said the leader.

Umno veteran Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Rahman said while Najib should go to the ground and rebut the allegations, he should keep attacks on Dr Mahathir to the minimum.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who is on a one-week break, is also expected to return to a busy schedule full of meetings and public appearances before the start of Ramadan.