

# Najib: Top Umno leaders will advise PM

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Umno's top leaders will help Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob to make the right choice on the 15th General Election (GE15) date, former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said.

The Barisan Nasional (BN) adviser was commenting on Ismail Sabri's remarks to Nikkei, published on Tuesday, that the country should wait for the right time to hold GE15 given the current inflation.

The Pekan member of parliament said he was convinced that Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, his deputy Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan and two other vice-presidents could convince Ismail Sabri of the importance of holding GE15 soon.

Aside from Ismail Sabri, the other two vice-presidents are Datuk Seri Khaled Nordin and Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid.

"Whatever it is, we will try.

"The top five have decided. Zahid, Mohamad and the three vice-presidents will discuss and we will make sure to help the prime minister make the right choices.

"The stakes are too high now. This is not about Najib or Zahid or Ismail Sabri, but this is about the future of our alliance and the country," said the former Umno president in his speech at the BN convention in the World Trade Centre here yesterday.

He warned against delaying GE15, saying failure to act at the most opportune moment could cause another disappointment for BN, like how it lost to Pakatan Harapan in 2018.

"For the first time, I will admit that GE14 should've been done after the (2017) Sea Games.

"We could've probably won big if this had happened.

"But because of certain pressures, we postponed it and after

we did that, the situation changed.

"But today, the opposition is in disarray, which means, God willing, BN is getting more popular and stronger.

"If we want to talk about inflation, I may not be an expert on the economy, but I know that inflation has a cycle. It is not a two- or three-month cycle. It could go up for two or three years."

On Tuesday, Ismail Sabri told Nikkei that he would wait for "the right time" to call an election, given inflationary pressures partly stemming from the Ukraine conflict.

Bank Negara Malaysia is expecting headline inflation to average between 2.2 per cent and 3.2 per cent this year, with food costs up 4.1 per cent in April.

Earlier last month, the central bank unexpectedly raised its key interest rate to cool inflationary pressures.