

ISA repeal in March, says Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 30 — The Internal Security Act (ISA) will be repealed in March after two replacement laws are drafted, Datuk Seri Najib Razak said today.

The prime minister told reporters that his promised reform timetable would instead begin with the repeal of the Banishment and Restricted Residence Act when Parliament reconvenes next week.

“Next week I will begin the process but ISA will be done in March as we need to draft two new laws,” the Umno president said after chairing a supreme council meeting this evening.

He also said that amendments to the Police Act to allow for freedom of assembly other than street protests, will likely be tabled in November.

Najib announced a raft of reforms including the lifting of three states of emergency in his Malaysia Day address, and vowed to give Malaysians greater liberties.

He had promised on Tuesday that his Cabinet would meet this week to decide on the timing of reforms with the first round to begin in the upcoming Dewan Rakyat sitting.

Najib came to power in April 2009 with the promise of reviewing the ISA but decided on doing away with the security law that critics say has been abused by Barisan Nasional (BN) for political purposes.

Along with a parliamentary select committee on electoral reforms, the repeal of the ISA appear to be key concessions by Najib in a drastic move to win back middle Malaysia before a general election expected within the year.

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