

Najib, Anwar in Jakarta, speculation mounts of possible meeting
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KUALA LUMPUR, June 15 - Datuk Seri Najib Razak and political arch-rival Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim are in Jakarta today, fueling talk of a meeting that could help the prime minister face down possible rivals in parliament and his own party after poor results in Election 2013.

The Malaysian Insider understands that the meeting has been in the works for at least a week, just as Najib is facing a likely challenge in the Umno elections this year end and a possible motion of no confidence after parliament convenes on June 24.

It is learnt that Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who is close to both leaders, has been tasked to facilitate the meeting. He is in Jakarta for a bilateral visit.

"A meeting has been set up with Najib before Anwar meets Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on Saturday," a source told The Malaysian Insider.

Aides to both leaders are tightlipped about the meeting but sources say the duo have a common interest in preventing other challengers for the prime minister's post.

Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah has been meeting disgruntled Barisan Nasional (BN) lawmakers this past week to discuss his leadership bid in the 222-seat Dewan Rakyat while Najib's deputy, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, has been coy about a possible challenge in Umno polls this year end.

Most political analysts say Najib is too popular, even more than his party, to lose his government and party posts.

"But Najib is facing twin strikes against him, so he needs to find some allies," another source told The Malaysian Insider, noting the irony that Anwar himself wanted the country's top post.

It is not known if the Indonesian president is aware of the talks in his capital city but former Indonesian vice-president Jusuf Kalla mediated between both leaders before the May 5 general elections for a peaceful electoral campaign.

But Kalla had said the deal broke after Anwar began a nationwide campaign to protest the Election 2013 results. The PKR leader said Najib never signed the pact despite a verbal agreement.

Malaysian leaders, especially Umno, have been known to hold private meetings in Jakarta, which is about two hours flight from Kuala Lumpur, to avoid publicity and gossip.

Najib and Anwar are known to have close ties with Indonesian leaders, who are keen to see stability in neighbouring Malaysia which employs some two million Indonesian professionals, workers and housemaids.

Both Anwar and Najib were part of the Team Wawasan or Vision Team that swept through top posts in the 1993 Umno polls, with Muhyiddin, Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib and Datuk Seri Abdul Rahim Thamby Chik.

Umno sacked Anwar in 1998 after he was fired on sodomy and corruption charges while Muhammad left the party before last month's general elections.

Zahid was the then Anwar ally and Umno Youth leader who used the Indonesian term KKN for corruption, cronyism and nepotism in a thinly-veiled attack against Malaysia's longest-serving prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the 1998 Umno assembly.

He was briefly held under the Internal Security Act (ISA) while Anwar was fired as deputy prime minister and deputy Umno president on sodomy and corruption charges just months after that assembly.

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