

PM: New geopolitical challenges causing Malaysia to sit up
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Najib Razak says while world is experiencing positive economic growth, Malaysia too recorded an encouraging 5.6% growth in the first quarter of this year.

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is monitoring closely the geopolitical developments taking place in the world so that decisions and measures taken are in accordance with the country's interests, Prime Minister Najib Razak said today.

He cited the Gulf crisis, the threat of North Korea's ballistic missile tests and the United Kingdom elections that resulted in a hung parliament as some of the geopolitical uncertainties that have attracted worldwide attention.

"These are besides the threat of violent extremism that is a major challenge for us. We also realise that there is a new and more serious risk that we have to deal with, that is the geopolitical risk," the Umno president told a press conference after chairing a meeting of the party's supreme council at Menara Dato' Onn here today.

Earlier this week, the world was shocked by the decision of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and the Maldives to break off diplomatic relations with Qatar, alleging that it was financing the Daesh (Islamic State) militant group.

Najib also said that the world was experiencing positive economic growth and Malaysia also recorded an encouraging economic performance in the first quarter of this year, namely a 5.6% growth compared to 4.1% in the corresponding period last year.

Meanwhile, on the Pujut by-election, Najib, who is Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman, said that he would be meeting Sarawak Chief Minister Abang Johari Openg soon to determine the most suitable candidate for BN.

The state seat became vacant after DAP's Ting Tiong Choon was removed as assemblyman by the Sarawak State Assembly on May 12 for allegedly having Australian citizenship in the past.

Nominations have been scheduled for June 20 with polling on July 4.

At the same time, Najib also said that preparations for the 14th general election (GE14) were running smoothly.

On other matters, he said Umno's membership was on the rise. "This is a very positive development, many individuals are coming in voluntarily to Umno offices to register as members," he said.

“On average about 300 people a day; this is something that we have not seen before,” he added.

Earlier, before chairing the meeting, Najib gave away prizes to 17 winners of a lucky draw held in conjunction with Umno’s 71st anniversary celebration at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil here on May 11.

Kuala Terengganu Umno member Saifuldhari Abu Bakar took home the grand prize, a Proton Perdana 2.4L car.

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