

Headline	Unite in religious harmony		
MediaTitle	Sunday Star		
Date	05 Feb 2017	Color	Full Color
Section	Nation	Circulation	339,002
Page No	6	Readership	818,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	433 cm ²
Journalist	LOSHANAKSHAGAR	AdValue	RM 21,875
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 65,625



'Unite in religious harmony'

Najib: Malaysia a failed state if we cannot achieve this

By LOSHANA K SHAGAR
loshana@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia would be a "failed state" without national unity and interfaith harmony as its foundation, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He referred to interfaith harmony and unity as seeds that were planted by the founding fathers of Malaysia.

"They planted the seeds when we gained independence 60 years ago, and we are enjoying the fruits now.

"As Malaysians, we should continue to nurture this tree. If we allow it to become infested with termites or chop it down, it means we will have no place else to go.

"If that happens, Malaysia will truly become a failed state," said Najib at the **World Interfaith Harmony Week celebration at the Forest Research Institute (FRIM) yesterday.**

The celebration carried the theme "Love God, love your neighbour" and focused on youths, with various activities to educate them on the need to respect people of other beliefs.

Najib referred to the Federal Constitution as the basis for multi-racial, multi-religious acceptance in society.

"Our forefathers planted the first seeds of peace, harmony and unity when they decided on our Constitution.

"For instance, Article 3 says Islam is the religion of the federation, but other religions can be practised in peace and harmony.

"That, to me, is key," he said.



Together: Najib launching the World Interfaith Harmony Week at FRIM in Kepong. Looking on are Ministers in the Prime Minister's Dept Datuk Seri Joseph Kurup (left), Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom (second from right) and National Unity and Integration Dept director-general Datuk Azman Amin Hassan.

Watch the video
thestartv.com



Najib also called on Malaysians to continue upholding the concept of unity in diversity, calling it the bedrock of the nation.

"If we strengthen this culture of respect and celebrate diversity, our understanding and respect for those of other religious beliefs will increase. We will learn to not insult others, especially on social media," he said.

The Prime Minister acknowledged that more could be done to strengthen national unity, but said Malaysian society was on the right path.

"We have elevated festivals like Christmas, Wesak, Deepavali, Chinese New Year and even Gawai and Kaamatan to national celebrations.

"I also formed diplomatic relations with the Vatican; we have an



Strength in diversity: Religious leaders attending the launch of the World Interfaith Harmony Week in Kepong.

ambassador there now," he said.

However, Najib asserted that based on the Constitution, Islam was still the religion of the federation and that must be understood

by all Malaysians.

"We are a success story for unity and harmony, and I am committed to making Malaysia even more successful in the future," he added.