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| Headline | Elevate unity, harmony - Najib | | |
| MediaTitle | The Sunday Post (Kuching) | | |
| Date | 05 Feb 2017 | Color | Full Color |
| Section | Home | Circulation | 89,224 |
| Page No | 22 | Readership | 267,672 |
| Language | English | ArticleSize | 442 cm ² |
| Journalist | N/A | AdValue | RM 6,027 |
| Frequency | Daily (EM) | PR Value | RM 18,082 |



Elevate unity, harmony — Najib

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said unity and harmony should be further elevated so that Malaysia remains as a country that is peaceful and prosperous.

Using the analogy of the damar tree (*Agathis borneensis*) that he planted at the Forestry Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) in 2004, Najib said it was fertilised and taken care of well so much so now it had become a big and strong tree.

“Don’t ever cut down this tree, because if we do that or allow termite infestation, it will rot and collapse. It is a akin to us not having an umbrella to shelter under and this will make Malaysia a failed state,” he said.

Najib said this when officiating at the 2017 World Interfaith Harmony Week at FRIM’s field in Kepong here yesterday.

Also present were Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Tan Sri Joseph Kurup, Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom and chairman of the Inter-faith Relations Working Committee of Malaysia, Datuk Azman Amin Hassan.

Najib said Malaysia is a multi-racial and multi-religious country whose people were free to practice their beliefs guided by the Federal Constitution. The Prime Minister

said although Article 3 of the Federal Constitution stated that Islam is the official religion of the federation, non-Muslims could practice their religions in peace.

Najib said although Malaysia was full of diversity with plurality of races and religions which was perhaps too complex compared to other countries, it was the unity and harmony of the people that had ensured that Malaysia remained peaceful and prosperous.

“If we, as the inheritors of the founding fathers (continue) to defend the constitution, give meaning to the constitution, empower (the constitution), our nation will continue to be peaceful and harmonious although its diversity and plurality may be too complex compared to other countries,” he said.

Najib said the diversity must be defended and respected by all layers of society and not adversely affect it through negative actions which could disrupt the unity of the people.

“We cannot disturb, cannot curb or insult (other religions and races) even on Facebook or Twitter, we must respect every religion and its followers ... it is the uniqueness of this diversity that we must defend, strengthen as a Malaysian way of life,” he said.

Najib also expressed his determination towards further empowering the communal and religious unity as was done by past leaders.

“We are looking at continuity, (the late) Tun Abdul Razak Hussein (Malaysia’s second prime minister and Najib’s father) introduced the Rukun Negara (national philosophy), I continued with the 1Malaysia concept plus the wasatiyyah concept (practice of moderation), which is demanded by Islam.

“I furthered that with the “moments of unity” initiative,” he said.

He added that various religious festivals were also celebrated and made national celebrations, which symbolised the harmony of the country. — Bernama

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— Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Prime Minister

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Najib (fourth left) and other government leaders recite the Rukun Negara at the launching of 2017 World Interfaith Harmony Week. — Bernama photo