

Namewee to meet Najib this week
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After a year's wait, rapper-cum-filmmaker Wee Meng Chee - better known as Namewee - will meet the premier this week over the hurdles he has faced in producing his debut film 'Nasi Lemak 2.0'.

A China Press report today said Namewee had received a call from the Prime Minister's Department last Saturday, confirming the meeting. The date has yet to be fixed.

Namewee said he would speak about the challenges and woes he has experienced in applying for government grant to produce his film.

"I want to tell him that I have gone through many unnecessary mistakes ... I hope he can support this movie as well as local production," he is quoted as saying.

Expressing excitement, Namewee said he also hopes Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak would provide more opportunities and assistance to local filmmakers to introduce Malaysian culture to a wider audience.

According to a Sin Chew Daily report, Namewee will share his views on 1Malaysia with Najib.

"We will explain the 1Malaysia message conveyed by the movie and hope the government can view the 1Malaysia concept seriously by giving fair treatment to every Malaysian and supporting filmmakers from different races."

Namewee had sought grants from government agencies like the National Film Development Corporation and Creative Industries Fund over the past year.

Although Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz agreed to take up his request, it was eventually rejected by Information, Culture and Communications Minister Rais Yatim (right) on grounds that Namewee had been involved in activities that are against Malaysian norms and values.

Namewee then produced two short clips titled 'I want to meet the PM', which were uploaded on YouTube and watched by hundreds of thousands of viewers. In these, he narrated the process of pursuing government assistance.

It was then followed by a letter to Najib, asking for a meeting.

Semi-indie movie

Even without government aid, Namewee managed to produce the movie which was screened nationwide on Sept 8, raking in over RM200,000 the same day.

The 148-minute film, directed by Wee, is a semi-independent production that cost only RM1 million but features dialogues in Malay, English, Tamil, Mandarin and Chinese dialects used in Malaysia.

Namewee rose to notoriety after his rendition of the national anthem, dubbed 'I Love My Country Negarakuku', went viral in 2007.

He produced another rap song 'Nah!' with anti-racist lyrics that also grabbed media attention because of Malay-rights NGO Perkasa demonstrating against his promotional tour.