

Najib goes 'cool' on popular radio talk shows

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In an attempt to engage with the younger generation, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak this morning appeared on three popular radio programmes to demonstrate his 'coolness', or what is referred to in Bahasa Malaysia as 'sempoi'.

The 58-year-old politician tried to highlight his 'youthfulness' by focusing on his involvement in the social media through Facebook and Twitter, as well as his attendance at the SuaraKami concert last Saturday.

He also impressed the deejays by winning RM150 in prize money by defeating a female listener in the MixFM's Battle of the Sexes contest, which requires participants of one gender to answer questions related to the other sex.

Najib was asked which girl band Belinda Carlisle belonged to, and gave the correct answer, The Go Go's. He said he had a cassette tape of the 80s rock band in his younger days.

The premier then generously donated the prize to his rival.

During the light-hearted HitzFM's Gotcha show, Najib helped deejays JJ and Ean to startle their producer, The Jakeman.

In the pre-recorded call, he asked the popular spinner to give a two-hour slot on air to his son Nor Ashman.

"I ask you as a father... I want him to replace you... he can speak Mandarin as well," said Najib.

The shocked producer replied that the demand was "a bit tough" and he needed to listen to the music mixed by Ashman before making any arrangement.

Longer days, shorter nights

Najib started his radio blitz this morning on the Mix Breakfast show of MixFM around 7.50am, talking about his favourite football club Manchester United's recent impressive performance in the English Premier League.

He described his job as the "CEO of a company, except it is a slightly bigger", and that his "days have become longer and nights have become shorter" since he took office, due to the heavy workload.

Najib revealed that his iPhone alarm wakes him up at 6am or 6.30am every day with the 80s hit Karma Chameleon, and that he never hits the snooze button, although sometimes he is tempted to do so.

He also shared with listeners that he has not been allowed to go out on his own after he became the premier.

"I tried to slip out once but the whole Bukit Aman (federal police headquarters) was alerted. So, I had to give up the idea."

However, he said he had instructed his security personnel not to be too obtrusive when he is on the ground, engaging the people.

On both Mix Breakfast and HitzFM's Morning Crew, the second programme in which Najib participated, he shared his experience using social media to engage with youth.

Although he personally posts and reads messages on his Facebook and Twitter pages, Najib admitted that these were sometimes done by his aides.

"Otherwise, I can't run this country. I would be a PM who tweets all the time," he quipped.

He said he is amazed by the participation of Malaysians in social media, saying that messages posted by him at anytime of the day would "get whole raft of people replying" in just a few minutes.

Talking about his appearance at the SuaraKami pop concert last Saturday, Najib said he was supposed to hide behind the stage, but some of those in the audience spotted him, and he was eventually invited on stage.

He described the experience as "awesome", "great" and "sempoi", a popular Malay word that means 'simple', 'laid back' or 'cool'.

Najib said he picked up the word after some people used it to describe his attendance at the concert.

"Rooney is sempoi, JD is sempoi," he replied when requested by the two deejays to use the word in a sentence.

There were also some serious moments, when Najib was asked about the most interesting person he has met.

"The person who struck me the most was (former South African President) Nelson Mandela, for what he has gone through. He was a man larger than life... so forgiving despite the cruelty inflicted on him all the years."

After the two English radio programmes, Najib had a brief appearance on the Rihuh Pagi show of Malay radio station EraFM.

In light of a possible snap general election that may be called anytime, the prime minister has been trying hard to engage with the young voters over the past few months through new platforms such as popular radio programmes, concerts, the social media and by using trendy, youthful language.

Young voters are seen as kingmakers in the 13th general election, but they have been showing more inclination towards the opposition coalition, which features more young leaders and candidates.