

Najib wants 'Vishwaz' with the Sikhs

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak is moving to shore up support from the Sikh community amidst rumours of an impending snap election.

“For the Tamil speakers I use the word *Nambikei* which means trust and confidence, so for the Sikhs the word (in Punjabi) should be *Vishwaz* which means confidence,” he told a gathering of over a thousand Sikhs celebrating their holy festival of Vaisakhi at the Dataran Merdeka tonight.

“*Vishwaz*”, Najib said, describes the close rapport between the Sikhs and the government which started since and even way before Merdeka.

As proof, he named successful Sikhs who have contributed to the civil service and other sectors and extolled members of the community who fell while defending the country against the Japanese invasion and the Communists during the Emergency.

To further cement the ongoing deal, Najib announced an allocation of RM3.2 million to manage and refurbish needy Gurdwaras or Sikh houses of worship.

The PM also slipped in another RM2.16 million for use by the community to enhance the teaching of the Punjabi language and for youth development.

As a further prize, he announced that Sikhs who are civil servants shall be given one day unrecorded leave on Vaisakhi every year from now on.

Najib also took a dig at the Bersih 3.0 pro-electoral reform rally which attempted to organise a sit-in at the iconic venue by adding that the Vaisakhi gathering was one example how the place can be used for peaceful purposes and not a riot.

Vaisakhi falls on April 14 annually, though celebrations for the Sikh holy festival at the national level for this year were only done tonight.

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