

PM's lavish dinner with overseas Malaysians
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After paying millions in public funds to consultancy firms Apco Worldwide and FBC Media to spruce up his government's image overseas, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak may be spending more of the rakyat's ringgit, this time to promote himself to expatriate Malaysians in London.

According to an article published by watchdog website *Sarawak Report*, the PM will be hosting over 1,000 overseas Malaysians at the prestigious O2 Arena, in the UK capital at a "Meet the PM" event organised by the Malaysian High Commission.

"All Malaysian's living in the UK are invited to attend what is billed as a free event, with food and drink provided and cultural entertainment on offer throughout," described the article, quoting the official website of the Malaysian Immigration Department branch in London, which carried a banner ad promoting the event.

The O2 Arena is popular for the staging of pop concerts and prestigious events, the building, which features most uniquely on the European city's skyline, being one among the venues chosen for the 2012 London Olympics and was part of the itinerary for the late pop legend Michael Jackson's final tour that never happened.

Specifically, the meet-and-greet session will be at the IndigO2, a 2,410 capacity live music club for small-scale music, club, after shows, corporate and private events.

It was billed as "pricey", just one step below very expensive, on an online site listing function venues for rental.

The *Sarawak Report* article also said that the Malaysian High Commission is working quietly via sms and private messages to gather the 1,000 odd crowd for the premier's do on May 14 night, probably to avoid demonstrations by supporters of electoral reform pressure group, Bersih.

Walkabout carried too far?

The portal decries the event as another unjustifiable spending of public funds to promote the ruling coalition at the expense of the rakyat, quoting several overseas Malaysians in London who criticised the planned event as unnecessary.

The visit can be seen to be part of Najib's walkabout around the nation since last year, meeting up with the various races who make up multicultural Malaysia and select pressure groups like Umno-linked missionary and welfare group Pekida.

His whirlwind trips meeting up with such groups are often accompanied by announcement of goodies and allocations, especially with polls expected before March next year.

Just two days ago Najib met up with the Sikh community promising more monetary allocations

for education, religious and social development as well as calling on all Sikhs to forge Vishwaz or confidence in their relationship with the government.

Malaysians abroad are mostly seen as anti-BN, with many upset that they are not allowed to vote despite many requests and legal action in the courts.

Malaysian expatriates represent some of the ruffled feathers that Najib may need to smooth as polls loom closer, though it is not known what will be the offering he is bringing to them nor what use it would be as they are at present are still unable to vote.

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