

Amid tensions, PM urges calm among civil servants

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Amid religious tensions over the use of the word 'Allah', Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today urged civil servants to be calm in resolving issues resulting from differences between communities.

In his maiden 2014 monthly address to civil servants at the Prime Minister's Department (PMD) this morning, Najib told them that such issues cannot be allowed to threaten the harmony of the country which was painstakingly built.

"When I meet leaders of the world, they feel proud of us and are curious how Malaysia can maintain a peaceful situation despite complex differences.

"So when issues arise, we must address them not through feelings or emotions but through maturity and calmness based on the rule of law and dialogue," he said at Perdana Square within the compound of the PMD in Putrajaya.

Najib drew attention to the nation's success in maintaining peace and harmony despite its multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-lingual society.

"We must pay attention to this so that issues that arise from time to time will not threaten this (peaceful) situation which we have achieved for a long time," he said.

In his brief 12-minute address, Najib said the country's development will mean nothing if this peace is lost.

"It is pointless to be proud of our achievements but one of the pillars of this nation is allowed to crash and burn.

"If that happens, all we have built will become meaningless.

"I hope in 2014, we continue our successes but also maintain what we have achieved and inherited by putting the utmost value to them," he said.

Islamic authorities have insist that Christians cannot use the word 'Allah' to refer to God, claiming that the word is exclusively for Muslims.

This ban have also been made into law in several states including Selangor but Churches have continued to use the word, triggering protests among conservative

Muslim groups.

'More incentives if economy stronger'

Najib touched on two topics, with the other being on economy where he urged civil servants to help continue to agenda of reform.

"To me, a nation will only see sustainable economic growth if it is willing to reform its economy, that being structural and policy reforms that are updated from time to time.

"If this is the concept for the rest of the world, then Malaysia is no exception," he said.

Najib added that these reforms included subsidy rationalisation but assured the civil servants that they will not be unnecessarily burdened.

"I am confident and believe that if the economy is strong, our revenue stable, then more developmental projects can be done.

"Then, incentives and welfare for civil servants and other groups can be considered from time to time - but all this must be grounded in a strong economy," he said.

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