

PM: Hawker food 'tastier' than hotel fare

MalaysiaKini.com

Apr 2, 2015

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, at times, prefers hawker food compared to dishes served at five star hotels because it is "tastier".

"Among the roles played by hawkers and petty traders, they prepare delicious food at affordable prices," said Najib in his speech at Jalan Alor today.

"Sometimes, when eating a particular dish and we compare it to a five star hotel, the one prepared by hawkers is much tastier.

"Even though we have to pay a higher amount, even 10 times more, food at stalls is much tastier," he said, to applause from the audience.

Najib said this when launching a micro financing scheme for Chinese hawkers and petty traders on Jalan Alor.

The road, situated in the Bukit Bintang area in Kuala Lumpur, is well-known among tourists for hawker food.

It is also located in the Bukit Bintang parliamentary constituency held by DAP, and is considered an opposition stronghold.

The tourist attraction had also been upgraded under the 'Jalan Alor Night Food Paradise' project by KL mayor Ahmad Phesal Talib in September 2013, which reportedly included improvements to the furniture, waste disposal, and water system amidst objections.

'RM30mil micro financing allocation'

Meanwhile, further emphasising the role played by hawkers and petty traders, Najib said they were important because Malaysians love to eat, pointing out how Jalan Alor is lined with rows of food stalls.

"We can find food at 3am, even 4am. In other countries, if you go to America or Europe, everything is closed by 11pm.

"In Malaysia, we can eat 24 hours a day," he said.

Stressing how traders must be assisted, especially since it was harder for them to obtain loans without pay slips, Najib explained that the micro financing scheme would not be as strict as bank loans.

Hawkers and petty traders can apply for loans between RM5,000 to RM15,000 from the

RM30 million allocated for the scheme.

Nevertheless, Najib expressed hope that the borrowers would repay the loans.

"If you don't, it will be hard for all of us. Debts must be repaid, right?" he asked the audience who replied "yes".

Najib, after his speech, tasted several dishes at a stall before he was whisked away in his car.

It was unclear whether the absence of a press conference was due to him wanting to avoid the press asking about controversial remarks against him made by former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

However it is not unusual for Najib to not address the media as he normally rushes off to other functions.

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