

No place for violent extremism in Asean, says Najib
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Najib Abdul Razak has rallied Asean countries to stand united against the threat of violent extremism, against the backdrop of the Paris attacks and, closer to home, the murder of a Malaysian by a militant group in southern Philippines.

The Malaysian prime minister said Asean, home to over 600 million people, must remain as a beacon of moderation and an oasis of peace and tolerance.

He pointed out that the citizens of Asean were inherently moderate people who had made a virtue out of their diversity, different faiths, ethnicities and cultures.

"The power of our example of remaining peaceful, tolerant, harmonious and inclusive societies is our best defence and guarantee against violent extremism, against terrorist groups, against those people who seek to destroy our way of life," he said.

Najib said this when opening the 2015 Asean Business and Investment Summit here today in conjunction with the 27th Asean Summit and related summits.

Against the threats posed by such groups bent on creating trouble, Najib said: "We must stand together, and the business community must work hand in hand with governments to make sure that the Asean region continues to have peace and stability."

Najib, who will preside over the Kuala Lumpur gathering in his capacity as 2015 Asean chair, said he would further elaborate on the threats at the Asean summit.

"I will talk tomorrow about some of the threats, what happened in Paris and to our own Malaysian Bernard Then who was murdered in the most horrific manner," he said.

Then was among two people kidnapped by a group of gunmen who rushed into the Ocean King Restaurant in Sandakan, Sabah at 7.45pm on May 14. The other person has been released.

Then, 39, was reported to have been beheaded in southern Philippines.

A series of attacks against Parisian targets on Nov 13 resulted in the deaths of over 100 people, drawing international outrage including from Malaysia's Najib.

- *Bernama*

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