

We can weather all extremisms, says Najib
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Malaysia can withstand the tide of all forms of extremism and radicalism with good governance, transparency, a vibrant democracy, the empowerment of its citizens through education and economic growth with equity, Najib Abdul Razak said on Tuesday night.

NONE "We can face the challenges of preserving our hard-won independence and sovereignty," the prime minister said.

"We are One family. Malaysia is our home. We are 1Malaysia, where the people are given priority and performance is emphasised. The thrust of 1Malaysia is People First, Performance Now," he said at the "Faces of 1Malaysia" gala dinner at the Mandarin Oriental in Washington, which was also attended by US policy makers.

Najib said Malaysia had also demonstrated that a Muslim country could be democratic, united, progressive, tolerant and economically competitive.

Meanwhile, Information Communication and Culture Minister Rais Yatim, in his speech, said the Malaysian-American friendship had been enhanced to a higher plane by the gathering which had "drawn us together to foster a new level of friendship and understanding."

'Spinal similarity'

Rais, who is also acting foreign minister, said that if there was a spinal similarity between the two countries, it was the spinal role that multiracialism and multi-ethnicity played in shaping life in the past and the future.

rais yatim pc 020709 01 "This duality of diversity between the peoples of Malaysia and the United States indeed buttresses our common values and best practices," he said.

Rais said that although this is the first time Malaysia had brought direct elements of Malaysia to the American public, "nonetheless, we feel well disposed that Malaysian-American friendship is taking a truly positive turn."

"Needless to say, by understanding each other's culture we will further help the cordial bilateral relations that both countries have enjoyed."

The gala dinner was the second segment of the inaugural "Faces of 1Malaysia" cultural and handicraft festival being held in Washington in a move to provide the American people the opportunity to appreciate the harmony of talents of Malaysia's diverse community and its rich culture and arts.

The first segment was held over the weekend at the National Geographic Society Building here.

The festival was organised by the Information Communication and Culture Ministry, its agencies, including the National Culture and Arts Department (JKKN), Istana Budaya, Akademi Seni Budaya and Warisan Kebangsaan and Kraftangan Malaysia, and also Tourism Malaysia, Sutra Dance Theatre and Permata Seni Muzik.

- Bernama

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