

Najib: Practise mutual respect, don't trample on sensitivities
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Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak today urged the people to observe the principle of mutual respect and avoid trampling on racial and religious sensitivities.

He said this principle was important to ensure harmony in the country and at the same time, prevent extreme or anachronistic feelings.

"As Muslims, we should not hurt the feelings of people of other races or religions, but they too should not do anything to hurt the sensitivities of Muslims in this country," he said at a breaking-of-fast with about 3,000 residents of Gombak at the Kompleks Amaniah grounds in Batu Caves, near Kuala Lumpur.

Also present was Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Noh Omar, who is also Selangor Umno liaison deputy chairman.

Najib, who is also Selangor Umno liaison chief, said Malaysians should also uphold the principle of moderation as it could enhance mutual respect between Muslims and non-Muslims in this country.

Commenting on Serdang member of parliament Teo Nie Ching being in the prayer area of the Al-Huda Surau in Kajang and giving a speech there recently, Najib reminded all quarters not to do anything that could cause uneasiness to others.

"This is just a reminder and not to heat up the issue. Before we do anything, we must be careful and think whether it would upset those from a different religion or not, especially when it involves a sacred place."

'No speeches in mosques'

He said although there was no specific reason for prohibiting non-Muslims from entering such places, Muslims could refer to the Quran, hadith and the ruling made by the National Fatwa Council at its 90th meeting in March this year, that non-Muslim tourists entering mosques and their prayer halls must first obtained permission from the management of the mosques, and must be properly attired (covered up) and behave properly.

Najib said only Muslims could give speeches or talks in the mosques or surau, so if non-Muslims did that, it would be against the hadith.

He said the Sultan of Selangor had also ordered that non-Muslims not be allowed to enter the prayer area of mosques and surau in the state, as spelt out in Section 3 of the Selangor Islamic Law Administration Enactment.

"In 1989, Queen Elizabeth entered a state mosque all covered up and she did not enter its main prayer area," he said.

Najib said non-Muslims should therefore respect mosque guidelines just like Muslims would do when they entered other houses of worship so as not to hurt religious sensitivities.

"If we don't politicise houses of worship such as mosques, surau, temples and churches, we will continue to live in harmony in this country, which is a member of the Organisation of

the Islamic Conference (OIC) and has the chance of becoming a developed nation by 2020."

At the function, the prime minister also handed over immediate aid of RM500 each to four fire victims, RM18,000 for 18 mosques in the Gombak parliamentary constituency and Raya contributions to 142 poor people and 158 orphans.

Najib also performed Maghrib, Isyak and Tarawih prayers with local residents at the Al-Amaniah Mosque, which is located next to the Amaniah Complex.

- Bernama

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