



**1Malaysia not a political gimmick - Rais**  
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Information Communication and Culture Minister Rais Yatim told Malaysian students in London that the 1Malaysia concept mooted by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak is not a political gimmick but a noble vision to ensure Malaysians remain united under a fair and just system.

He said 1Malaysia encompasses everyone so that none would be left out in the country's march towards progress.

"1Malaysia is a vision to unite us under a fair and just system," Rais was quoted by Bernama as saying at a meeting with Malaysian student leaders on Saturday night.

He said unity and harmony had been entrenched among the Malaysian society since the pre-independence era and was a source of strength for the push for its independence.

Rais, who joined the government in 1974 as a parliamentary secretary to the Culture, Youth and Sports Ministry, said he had seen for himself the government's determination in maintaining harmony among the multiracial society.

Speaking at length on the 1Malaysia vision, Rais also expressed concern over the possibility that the younger generation may be unable to fully appreciate the concept due to a lack of understanding about the country's history, especially on the efforts by leaders of various races to build the nation.

"We have many political parties; that's politics. But we should unite under the 1Malaysia umbrella irrespective of our political affiliations," he said.

### **Happy to see students of many races**

Rais said he was happy to note the presence of students from various races at the meeting held at Malaysia Hall, and said that their presence and the way they conducted themselves showed that there was indeed a strong sense of unity among them.

There are about 13,000 Malaysian students in the United Kingdom who, Rais said, would contribute meaningfully to the country by achieving excellence academically and staying united while overseas as well as when they returned home.

"If you bring back the knowledge and produce the kind of dignity that we need, then you would have contributed to 1Malaysia," he said.

Answering questions, Rais said as students, it is normal to want to criticise the government, which the government does not mind.

However, he said, the government would also like to see them strive to understand one another and to join hands in organising students' activities.

On blogging and criticising the government via such social media such as Facebook, he said there was no stopping anyone from doing so as long as they kept such criticisms within the perimeters of civility.

"If they cross the line, then they should be prepared to be held accountable for what they have written," he said.

"They must have a sense of respect for the rights of others, and not resorting to hurting others. They must contribute in a tangible way, and criticise within the boundaries of the law," he said.

### **1Malaysia an avenue to promote cultures**

On the promotion of Malaysian culture under the 1Malaysia, Rais said the concept provided an avenue for all races to promote their cultures.

It would be even better if the people also understood and celebrated the festivities of people in Sabah and Sarawak such as the Tadau Kaamatan and the Gawai Dayak, he added.

Asked about non-government organisations (NGOs) and individuals who were bent on painting a negative picture of 1Malaysia, Rais said there were bound to be a black sheep or two among NGOs.

"What we can do is to explain why their views are not compatible with the 1Malaysia vision," he said, adding that these groups were very small in number.

A large majority of Malaysia's 28 million population were supportive of the 1Malaysia concept, he added.

Rais, whose three-day visit to the United Kingdom ended today, later left for Barcelona, Spain, accompanied by wife Maznah Rais, to attend a four-day international telecommunications conference from Monday.

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