

**Najib: We'll adopt zero-tolerance against racism**  
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KUALA LUMPUR - In a significant pronouncement Friday, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak declared that a "zero-tolerance" policy will be adopted towards racism and quick action will be taken against perpetrators of racial slurs.

Speaking at a Barisan Nasional Youth Lab meeting here, Najib pledged that anyone found to be racist, would face immediate action against them. His remark was reportedly cheered by the gathering.

He told some 400 BN youths at the meet that "Our stand is not to tolerate any racist remarks by anyone. . Action will be taken against them".

However, Najib cautioned that alleged racist remarks must first be investigated before action was taken.

"We must adopt zero tolerance for those who play up such issues but we must check the facts first," he said.

The premier was responding to questions from the floor of recent racially-based remarks made by two school principals - one in Johor, the other in Kedah - against the Chinese and Indian communities.

To another question, Najib said education was a key factor in ensuring that civil servants did not make racist or insensitive remarks.

He said: "We must educate civil servants to understand and appreciate the 1Malaysia concept."

Barisan Youth chairman Khairy Jamaluddin presented the Youth Lab report at the meeting.

On the lab's suggestion to amend the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 to allow students to be involved in politics, Najib said he was still open to the idea as long as it brought more good than harm.

"I am still thinking about it. I am still open but we have to debate on the pros and cons so that we can make the right decision," The Star quoted him as saying.

"My desire is to see university students focus on academic excellence and not be engrossed with the politicking process. I am in favour of healthy politics but not if the process is abused," he added.

On the Lab's call to amend the Internal Security Act (ISA) to ensure it was not abused, Najib said the days of "scare politics" or using the ISA to wield power and show that one was in full control were gone.

"Misusing the ISA is counter-productive and will only cause people to be more angry and have more hatred towards the ISA," he added.

He said the era of "Government knows best" was over, adding that the 21st century called for the contestation of ideas from the people, The Star reported.

He also agreed to the Lab's suggestion for a special 1Malaysia Fund to support youth programmes that encouraged inter-racial relationships.

"It can be done in the short term. I will find the mechanism to do so," he said.

Najib also supported the idea by the lab to have a minimum wage for certain sectors, adding that they were currently formulating a mechanism between employers, workers and the Government.

To a question on press freedom, Najib said the media had more latitude today and were given more space. But he said they must be very careful in reporting, to ensure the truth was not twisted and racial flames were not ignited.

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