

Bangsa Malaysia bond

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KOTA KINABALU: Bangsa Malaysia is about how Malaysians see each other, and how we see ourselves, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

"It's all in the mind. If you see them through race or religion, you are going to be the loser. But if you see them as a friend, then you will be a winner."

He said the Bangsa Malaysia concept was not aimed at imposing Malay culture on other races, but to further strengthen multi-racial Malaysia.

"It is about bonding and working together for the benefit of all Malaysians. It is for our own good.

"Ultimately we share the wealth of the country together," he said at the opening of the 17th Liberal Democratic Party congress here yesterday, when incumbent LDP president Tan Sri Chong Kah Kiat stepped down to make way for lawyer Datuk Liew Vui Keong.

Najib said the past leaders of Barisan Nasional had made decisions for the benefit of the country, including opting for

national integration instead of national assimilation, and allowing Chinese and Tamil schools instead of a single national school system.

Admitting that there have been quarrels within BN, he said: "We do quarrel. We make demands but when it comes to

the crunch, we stay together as a family."

Earlier at the opening of the 21st Parti Bersatu Sabah congress, where founding president Datuk Seri Joseph Pairin Kitingan was returned unopposed, Najib said that BN component parties should refrain

from making demands for political mileage, as the coalition would not bow to such pressure tactics.

"BN is strong enough to withstand pressure from any quarters," he told reporters after opening the PBS con-

gress. He said the return of PBS to the BN fold three years ago was a positive development because it showed that the party was willing to reinvent itself.

"They accepted the political reality that we needed to work closely together and the only way for us to do that was through Barisan," he said.

On whether Sept 16 or Malaysia Day should be declared a national holiday, Najib said the Cabinet would have to deliberate on the matter.

On Saturday, Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said that Sabah and Sarawak should officially ask the Cabinet to declare Sept 16 a national holiday.

On the issue of illegal immigrants in Sabah, Najib said that the Government was trying its best to resolve the matter but the problem was that the Philippines government was not accepting back its people.

He said Malaysia had a problem proving they were Filipinos because of the lack of documents.

■ Go to www.thestar.com.my for the online poll on Malaysia Day.