



That's tasty: Najib's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor feeding him some mee goreng during a visit to stalls organised by the Felda Foundation after he had opened the early intervention programme in Kuantan yesterday, as Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek (third from right) looks on. — Bernama

Najib: Envoy's *The Star 24/6/07* remarks moot

Govt to seek Wisma Putra's views

By **SIMON KHOO**

simonkhoo@thestar.com.my

KUANTAN: The Government will seek the views of Wisma Putra on the "factually disputable" remarks attributed to Europe's top envoy to Malaysia, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said.

He said the remarks by the head of the European Commission delegation to Malaysia, Thierry Rommel, urging the Government to roll back its affirmative action policy for the majority Malays were clearly against convention.

"By right, an envoy should not make any comment pertaining to the policies of the country he is attached to. This can be construed as trying to interfere in the internal administration of the country.

"On the contrary, the duty of an envoy is to foster closer bilateral ties between two countries," he said after launching an early intervention programme for children with disabilities here yesterday.

He was asked to comment on the remarks by Rommel who openly criticised Malaysia's 37-year-old New Economic Policy (NEP) that gives a host of privileges in jobs, education, business and other areas to ethnic Malays.

Rommel was quoted by AP as saying that the NEP was discriminatory and amounted to protectionism against foreign companies.

He added that the Government was using the NEP as an excuse to practise "significant protectionism of its own market," including the automotive sector, steel, consumer goods,

»The duty of an envoy is to foster closer bilateral ties between two countries«

DATUK SERI NAJIB TUN RAZAK

agricultural products, services and government contracts.

Najib said though the remarks were way out of the principles of diplomatic relations, the Government had yet to decide whether to summon the EU envoy for an explanation.

"Let us consult Wisma Putra before deciding on the next course of action," he said.

On the proposal to cut down on the number of "extra" public holidays at national and state levels, Najib said the Cabinet had yet to make a decision.

"When the matter is brought up for deliberation, we will consider it.

"I do not want to make any specific commitment as yet," he said, adding that "everyone" used a certain basis to constitute their understanding of a holiday.

On the numerous defects found in Pekan Hospital, Najib, who is also Pekan MP, said action could be taken against the contractor if the building was still within the warranty period.