

Chinese are patriotic and loyal: Najib

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DEPUTY Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak says he believes the Chinese in the country are patriotic but are not good at showing it.

He said there was no doubting the Chinese's loyalty to the country, but stressed that they must know how to express it, such as by taking part in various government-sponsored activities and celebrations.

He pointed out that the keen participation of the Chinese youth in the National Service (NS) is reflective of their patriotism.

In an interview with *China Press*, Najib, who is also the defence minister, said as part of Malaysian society, there was much the Chinese could do (to show their love for the country).

"Accepting the NS, and regarding it as a good programme, is a good example (of patriotism)," he said.

“We look at (other people's) personal qualities, more than (their) skin colour or religious beliefs.”

He said this year is the 50th year of independence for Malaysia and the crowds taking part in the celebrations should comprise all races, not just one community.

"Another way (to show one's love for the country) is to answer the government call to join the military. At present, the Chinese are not keen to join the service.

"This is not just because the Chinese are not interested in joining the military service, but because they see more career opportunities in other fields."

Asked for his comment on the criticisms every now and then by certain politicians, and even ministers, that Chinese are not patriotic, Najib said Barisan Nasional leaders no longer harbour such thinking.

He said he has many Chinese friends and gets along

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well with the Chinese.

On unity, the deputy prime minister said Malaysians now are more united than they were 50 years ago.

There is also more interaction among the races now than before, he said.

He said nowadays, the emphasis is not on the differences among the races because when Malaysians make friends with fellow Malaysians they do not see whether the other party is Malay, Chinese or Indian; rather they look at their character and personalities.

"We look at (other people's) personal qualities, more than (their) skin colour or religious beliefs."

However, Najib said despite the open-mindedness of the majority of Malaysians, the government still needs to pay attention to promoting

national unity because there are still people, though their number is small, who are very narrow in their thinking or who do not feel comfortable mixing with other communities.

On another matter, Najib said the government will not revise the fuel prices within the year.

He said although the government is still subsidising petrol, the Opposition continues to harp on the fuel price hikes made last year.

Najib, who always looks radiant and appears in the pink of health despite having to maintain a hectic lifestyle as the country's No. 2, said he stays healthy by maintaining a balanced diet and exercising regularly.

And his secrets to staying alert always? Consuming bird's nest soup regularly.