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Project the truth about Malaysia abroad, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR: Tourism stakeholders should project the truth about Malaysia to the markets abroad and correct misconceptions which foreigners may have about the country.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said negative views of the country grounded in falsehood and spread through social media must be cleared so that tourists are

not turned off about visiting the country.

"At the same time, we must be able to deliver services which are on par with international standards or we run the risk of falling behind other destinations which are competing for the same target markets," he said.

Najib said there must be close collaboration between the Government and the private sector, pointing out that neither could work in isolation and that there

should be continuous and greater engagement between tourism practitioners and different stakeholders in the Government.

Addressing members of the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA), he said there was a need to examine and resolve specific issues including incentives to make the tourism industry more competitive.

"Immigration issues like visa-on-arrival, visa fees and electronic visas need to be revisited to

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make it easier for certain categories of tourists to enter the country," Najib said, adding that the Cabinet Committee on Tourism could be re-convened to tackle and resolve cross-ministerial issues.

"But in the meantime, the industry itself must believe in our tourism fundamentals and must in their own way market those fundamentals to help boost the industry," he said.

The Prime Minister said in Malaysia's case, its tourism funda-

mentals centred around its hospitality, friendliness and culture of service, diversity and value for money that foreign tourists would experience here.

"All of these are still huge selling points that need to be amplified and communicated across all channels to drive up tourism numbers," he said, calling on MATTA to work closely with the Government to ensure that the tourism industry,