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Najib vows to help Indians

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They have played big part in country's development, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has reiterated his pledge to help Malaysia's Indian community gain their inclusive share of the country's development.

The Prime Minister said as the country's leader he believed in developing Malaysia on an inclusive basis.

"I will pay great attention to helping the Indian community in Malaysia.

"I am not saying this as a political statement but I have proven it and I have a track record in delivering for the Indian community in Malaysia," Najib said in his speech at the inaugural World Kongu Tamilar Conference held at Stadium Negara here.

More than 10,000 delegates and participants took part, including 2,000 from 12 countries where Tamilar, or Tamil-speaking people, live.

The Kongu community originated from Kongu Nadu, a region in India comprising the western part of Tamil Nadu including parts of the states of Karnataka and Kerala.

The event was organised by the Malaysian Kongu Tamilar Association, which represents 80,000 of the 200,000 Kongu Tamilar in Malaysia.

Najib also hailed the Indian community for its role in helping to build the country together with their fellow Malaysians.

"The Indian community has a long and important history here in Malaysia, in helping build our



Happy birthday: Najib cutting his cake after launching the International Kongu Convention at the Stadium Negara in Kuala Lumpur.

vibrant young nation, and in contributing to the diversity and variety that is our strength and makes us unique."

Najib said he was glad that Malaysia was chosen to host the event, as Tamil is the most widely spoken language among Indians in Malaysia.

The Prime Minister also expressed pride over how the Tamil community in Malaysia has successfully safeguarded their lan-

guage and culture.

He urged members of the Kongu community from India to consider Malaysia as a gateway to the Asean region.

"We have a close cultural affinity, and are both countries that wish to guard our social traditions and customs while pursuing greater economic growth and social cohesion," he added.

Also present at the event here yesterday was MyPPP president

Tan Sri M. Kayveas.

After his speech, the organisers brought out a birthday cake on stage to celebrate the Prime Minister's 63rd birthday.

The delegates and participants then sang the *Happy Birthday* song to Najib twice, once in English and a second time in Tamil.

The Prime Minister was then presented with a large framed photograph of him and his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor.