

Newspaper	NEW STRAITS TIMES
Date	10 JUNE 2016

PRIME NEWS

# Etched in Najib's memory

NST  
- 10/6/2016

**CONFERENCE:**  
PM shares MH17 moment and other personal encounters

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**M**EETING the families of the victims of the downed Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 is probably among the moments that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak will remember for a long time.

Najib said it was the moment that he decided he would do whatever it took to recover the aircraft's black box in a rebel-held area in Ukraine.

"I asked myself, 'What can I do?'. I activated my international network to find someone who knows the leader of the rebel group (pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine)," he said as he shared a picture of the meeting during an informal question-and-answer session at the Wild Digital Conference here yesterday.

"We finally managed to get his number and I managed to speak to him on the phone with the help of a translator. He said, 'I (will) only hand over the black box to your people (Malaysia)'."

"I was directing the operations. It was a tough call to send our men to a

conflict area with the risk of being held hostage or shot."

Najib shared the stage with Catcha Group co-founder and chief executive officer Patrick Grove, offering his thoughts on the role of the Internet and social media with technopreneurs, investors and leaders in the digital business.

He told the audience that the political scene had evolved since he started his career 40 years ago.

"It is different and more challenging now than how it was 40 years ago. Back then, people asked for basic necessities, like electricity, but today, people, especially in the urban areas, are more demanding because of the (digital) ecosystem."

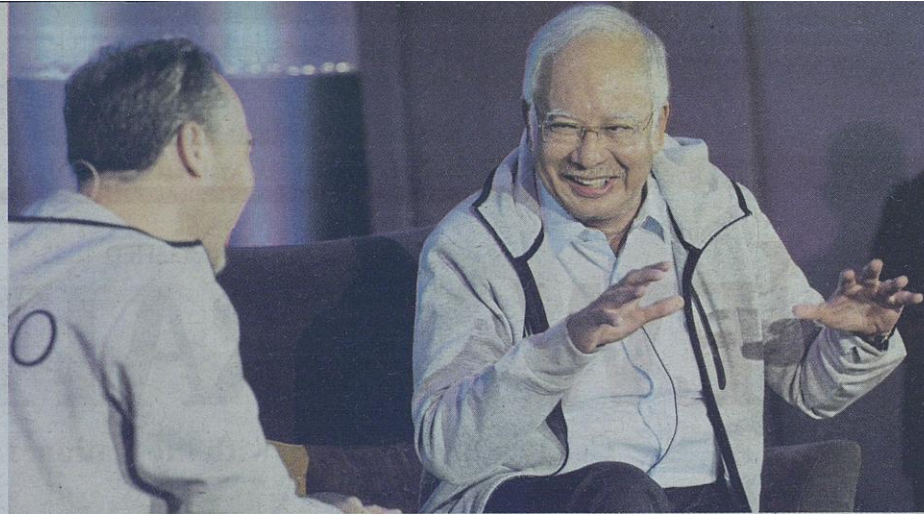
Also shared during the session was a picture of Najib with 6-year-old Addi Asyraf Mohamad Missbahuddin, who suffers from Alagille syndrome, taken last month during the Sarawak election.

Addi had told his father, who is a lorry driver, that he wished to meet Najib.

"More often than not, it is not the policy decision-making, but moments such as this (with the boy) that I remember most. I was happy to meet him at his home, although we initially wanted to bring him to the hotel where I was staying (during the Sarawak election)."

Grove asked Najib about his views on Internet commerce, and how information and communications technology had developed in Malaysia.

"I had a role in it. In 2004, when I was the deputy prime minister, I de-



Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** sharing a light moment with Catcha Group co-founder and chief executive officer **Patrick Grove** at the Wild Digital Conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Pic by Aizuddin Saad

## PM hopes aid will bring Raya cheer

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said he hoped that the RM500 Special Financial Assistance announced on Wednesday will help the 1.6 million civil servants in conjunction with the Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebration.

"I had announced payment of the Special Financial Assistance of RM500 to civil servants in Grade 54 and below, while government pensioners will receive RM250.

"Insya-Allah, this special government assistance will help civil ser-

vants in conjunction with Aidilfitri," he said on Facebook yesterday.

Some 743,000 government pensioners will receive the RM250 assistance. Payment of both assistance will be made on Monday.

cided to convince the government to improve the high-speed broadband penetration. It has actually exceeded our target of 50 per cent penetration by 2010 and is now more than 70 per cent.

"Recently, during the Sarawak election, I visited a *kek lapis* maker and I saw pictures of her holidaying in France on the wall.

"She could do it by selling *kek lapis* and venturing into e-commerce. I'm excited about schemes such as eUsahawan and eRezeki by MDEC (Malaysian Digital Economy Corporation Sdn Bhd), and I want to push young entrepreneurs to venture into e-commerce.

"They have great potential to be global champions in years to come," he said, as Grove shared pictures Najib had posted on social media.

Najib, who has several social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter and a blog, said he had a team to help him manage them.

"I do tweet, but my team also does it, and there are instances when I am on the move and would tell them what I like. But it's my content. I shake hands with people, so I can't be hiding in a corner (just to tweet)," said Najib, who took a selfie with Grove and tweeted it immediately.

Other pictures shared were a selfie with United States President Barack Obama in the presidential vehicle, The Beast, during the latter's visit here, a group photo with young entrepreneurs and a variety of local dishes.

"It is more comfortable than my Proton. It feels safe because it is bulletproof and can withstand explo-

sives up to a certain intensity," Najib said of The Beast.

During the session, Najib also shared his interest in music.

"Yes, I bought some music from iTunes, but I'm not going to tell you what songs they are.

"As you get older, the taste has moved on in terms of music taste. I listen to songs from the 1970s, but I also listen to newer songs from artistes like Bruno Mars and also those from in-between (era), like Lionel Richie. I'm a fan of Motown. They've got rhythm."

Grove had earlier handed over a hoodie to Najib with the words "Da-Boss" at the back.

"I'm going to wear this in the next cabinet meeting. Can I put it on?" he quipped, drawing laughter from the audience.