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PM praises Buddhists for being caring in times of need

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PETALING JAYA: Buddhist groups have often come forward to aid their fellow Malaysians in times of need such as the Kelantan floods in 2014, said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

"It was heart-warming to see so many Buddhists reaching out to the mostly Malaysian Muslims and orang asli communities who were severely impacted by the floods," he said.

The Prime Minister said in his Wesak Day message that all religions stressed on helping their fel-

low humans and Malaysian Buddhist groups had exemplified this every day by operating soup kitchens to feed the needy.

"Buddhists are also the largest group pledging cornea donations in the country, bringing sight to the sightless.

"They do this as a religious calling, serving all irrespective of race or religion. I must congratulate you for living up to this religious calling selflessly," he said.

He also noted the mobile clinics, old folks' homes and orphanages

run by Buddhist groups, adding that the faithful would also provide gift packs containing food rations and other necessities during celebrations like Hari Raya, Chinese New Year, Deepavali and Christmas.

Najib cautioned that "closing up within a religion causes bigotry, breeds extremism and misguided causes in the name of religion".

"Some even resort to violence in the misguided name of religion. While attempting to spearhead one's religion through such misguided ways, they only dig the grave

of one's own religion," he said.

He said Malaysians must mingle well with other religious groups so that the people would have better understanding and be respectful of each other.

The presence of so many Buddhist temples and centres in the country was testimony to the freedom of religion in multi-ethnic, multi-religious Malaysia, he added.

Malaysian Associated Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Maicci) president Tan Sri K. Kenneth Eswaran called on

Malaysians to unite and set aside their differences.

"Wesak Day symbolises victory of humankind over self-ignorance. It also shows the sacrifices made by Buddha in order to lead us to the right pathway of peace for humankind," he said.

"I pray that God blesses the underprivileged, as well as all business entrepreneurs to overcome the current volatile economic environment.

"We must strengthen our ties and sail together," he added.