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‘Moments of unity bring us closer’

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‘APPRECIATE EACH OTHER’: Malaysia’s spirit of unity transcends race and will preserve country’s peace, says Najib

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MALAYSIANS must promote more moments of unity to preserve the country’s independence, peace and sovereignty. Citing Malaysia’s recent achievement at the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro as an example, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said it had strengthened unity among the country’s multiracial community. In his “Amanat Merdeka” message yesterday, Najib said Datuk Lee Chong Wei’s performance in the badminton men’s singles finals was a “moment of unity” for Malaysians.

“My wife and I watched (Lee’s match) at Dataran Putrajaya and caught the exciting moments. “What was interesting and special was that the majority of Lee’s supporters were Malays, who cheered loudly for the king of Malaysian badminton,” he said to applause from the audience at the Putra World Trade Centre here. Najib also paid tribute to national badminton legend Datuk Misbun Sidek, who had trained Lee and acted as his mentor. “This is the beauty and miracle of Malaysia... Our spirit of unity transcends the boundary of race. We help and appreciate each other as Malaysians.”

The audience roared to show their approval for Lee, who was also present. Najib, in his heartfelt speech, also spoke about a famous eatery in Ipoh that was frequented by Malaysians from all walks of life. “This Nasi Kandar stall is known as ‘vanggey’, which means ‘please come’ in Tamil. “It is unique because it operates in a Chinese-owned restaurant called Rumah Tumpangan dan Kedai Kopi Yong Suan, that has existed since 1957. “What is special is that its customers are people of various races and backgrounds,” Najib said, adding that such eateries were an

example of national unity. Najib congratulated cartoonist Datuk Mohammad Nor Khalid, better known as Lat, for his ability to illustrate the country’s unity through his unique drawings and comics on Malaysian life. “Through his immensely popular and famous book *Kampung Boy*, Lat accurately painted a picture of multicultural Malaysia.” Najib said Lat’s portrayal of Malaysian life, through the colourful characters and witty dialogue, had captured the imagination of many. “It is obvious that Datuk Lat’s writings and drawings are well loved by many races.

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Datuk Seri Najib Razak

“This is another moment of unity and proof that Malaysians of various backgrounds can live under the same roof.” He praised the film *Ola Bola*, saying the movie brought Malaysians together in the fight to build a great and dignified country. “Another example of Malaysia’s moments of unity is Hari Raya Aidilfitri open houses, which have impressed tourists.” He said the government, since independence in 1957, practised inclusive policies and had never sidelined any ethnic community. “Our national diving queens, Pandelega Rinong and Cheong Jun Hoong, who grabbed silver at the Rio Olympics, are a shining example. “Pandelega, a Bidayuh girl from Sarawak, has proven that even representatives from minority communities can become champions. “Truly, the spirit of independence belongs to everyone.”