

Newspaper	NEW STRAITS TIMES
Date	10 FEBRUARY 2017

# PM DISAGREES WITH PAINTBRUSH SEIZURES

NST - 10/2/2017

Encourage traders to properly label items, says Najib

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**P**RIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has waded into the issue surrounding the Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry's seizures of paintbrushes believed to be made from boar bristles.

Najib said he did not agree with the action by the ministry in confiscating the brushes and admonishing hardware traders for selling them.

He said he would raise the matter with Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainudin.

"We must stop this. We cannot simply confiscate and compound (traders selling the brushes).

"We should instead encourage them to properly label such items," he said to some 3,000 people during a Chinese New Year celebration here yesterday.

Najib was referring to the raids in Perak and Terengganu which saw such brushes seized.

He said the Barisan Nasional government would continue adopting a policy of moderation, which was the key to peace and harmony.

"We must reject extremism in the country. The problem never lies in



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak tossing 'Yee Sang' during a Chinese New Year celebration in Kuching yesterday. With him is Sarawak Chief Minister Datuk Amar Abang Johari Abang Openg (fifth from left), Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Seri Douglas Uggah Embas (fourth from left), state Local Government Minister Datuk Dr Sim Kui Hian (fourth from right) and former deputy chief minister Tan Sri Alfred Jabu Numpang (third from left). PIC BY MUHD ZAABA ZAKERIA

religion. The problem, instead, rises due to extremism (among misled people) of any religion," he said.

Najib cited the threat of the Islamic State and the killing of Rohingya in Myanmar as examples of extremism.

"We must continue the policy of mutual respect," he said.

He called on the people to give continuous support to the Barisan Nasional government and described the opposition as a "dysfunctional lot".

He also took a jab at former prime

minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"Look, someone who said that the opposition was racist and anti-Islam for 22 years is now sitting next to them," he said, without naming the person.

Earlier, during his walkabout at the construction site of the new St Ann Church in Kota Padawan near here, Najib gave his assurance that all people in the country were allowed freedom of worship as stipulated in the Federal Constitution.

He also gave his assurance that he was the prime minister for all people in the country.

"I am a prime minister who embraces and upholds the spirit of Article 3 of the Federal Constitution, which provides the freedom to worship.

"The provision of the article also states that everyone should be allowed to practise their religion in peace and harmony.

"We must, therefore, continue to practise the provision stipulated by

the article."

Present were Chief Minister Datuk Amar Abang Johari Abang Openg and state Local Government Minister Datuk Dr Sim Kui Hian.

Najib pledged the Federal Government's commitment to provide financial assistance for the construction of the new church.

"The Federal Government and state government will donate generously to this church," he said, adding that the amount of donation would be decided later.