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Najib promises more Chinese schools

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KUALA LUMPUR: More Chinese schools will be approved for new growth areas, says Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak but he wants SJKC students to be proficient in Bahasa Malaysia.

Giving the assurance that the Government would be fair to the Chinese community in matters concerning education, the Prime Minister said that MCA president Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai had raised the need for more of such schools with him on many occasions.

He said Liow had asked for the Government to consider allowing more SJKCs to be set up in new townships because the percentage of Chinese living in these areas was high.

Najib said he would discuss the matter with Chinese-based Barisan Nasional component parties – MCA, Gerakan, Sarawak United Peoples' Party and Sabah's Liberal Democratic Party.

"Although I have been the 'shou xiang' (Prime Minister in Mandarin) for nine years, I have approved more allocation in my nine years heading the Government, compared to someone who helmed for 22 years.

"You can check the records for yourself," he said in obvious reference to former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"I give you the pledge that we will make it happen. I only ask of you that when we have more Chinese schools, please strengthen your proficiency in Bahasa Malaysia," he said.

Addressing the crowd at the Chinese Community Patriotic Assembly, the Prime Minister said language was one key to unity, which is why Malaysia's multi-racial society must be able to converse, read and understand the national language well.

"The MCA president and the deputy president (Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong) speak good Bahasa Malaysia. They are very fluent in the language. Let's not use 'gua' and 'lu' (me and you in Hokkien) when we speak," he said.

Optimistic of Malaysia's future, Najib urged



One Malaysia!: Dancers of different races posing during the Chinese Community Patriotic Assembly at Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur.

the people to progress, saying that there was much for them to look forward to, especially with the developments that were taking shape, including the additional MRT Lines, High-Speed Rail, East Coast Rail Link (ECRL), Pan Borneo and Bandar Malaysia projects to name a few, and the good relations enjoyed with many countries.

The Prime Minister paid tribute to Tun Michael Chen, whom he said was instrumental in helping his late father Tun Razak Hussein establish good relations with China, which Najib has continued.

Chen, a former MCA deputy president, served as Minister of Housing, Local Government and New Villages in the Razak administration.

"The good ties that I have established with the United States, Saudi Arabia, China, India and Asean is for the benefit of the country. We must be friends with the international community but at the same time, firm in protecting our sovereignty," he said.

Najib said his good relations with China – despite accusations that he was "selling the country" – brought positive impact to the country in terms of investments, construction of the ECRL, higher palm oil exports and an increase in tourist arrivals.

"Let us all move together as a nation because there is so much for us to look forward to. Let's not waste our time with the Opposition and concentrate on bringing progress and prosperity to the country for all to enjoy," he said.