

**Plans Afoot To Make Malaysia More Desirable Holiday Destination - Najib  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 16 (Bernama) -- Expressing delight over Melaka being declared a must-see place this year by The New York Times, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said it is the government's intention to make Malaysia a more desirable holiday destination for both local and foreign tourists.

"I was very pleased with the acknowledgement from The New York Times, which listed Melaka as one of the 'must-see' places of 2012.

"As a state steeped in rich history and culture, not to mention a gastronomic delight, I'm sure we can all agree that Melaka is deserving of the praise," he said in his posting titled 'The Little Treasures In Malaysia' on his 1Malaysia blogsite.

Najib observed that, sometimes, a foreigner's perspective helped to remind Malaysians of the very elements that make them unique as Malaysians.

"It reminds us that the things we are so accustomed to -- such as our regular teh tarik sessions at the mamak, our weekly Pasar Malam outings, and our local fruits such as durian and langsung -- are exactly the things that tourists and foreigners find so fascinating and uniquely Malaysian," he said.

Najib observed that, interestingly, in his travels abroad and interactions with Malaysians living overseas, they would always cite these things that they took for granted as the very things they missed.

"For the rest of us who live at least a large portion of our lives here, it is a blessing that such things are well within reach," he said.

The prime minister said it could be due to this realisation or due to rising cost of living, but Malaysians were opting for local holiday destinations more often.

In particular, households with a monthly income of RM1,001 to RM3,000 are travelling domestically the most, he said.

Urging Malaysians to better appreciate the uniqueness of their country, Najib said: "The next time you enjoy a teh tarik, or attend a wedding, or even visit your relatives in the kampung, I hope you take in your surroundings anew.

"In fact, why don't you tweet me photos of the things that are especially Malaysian. You might develop a new appreciation for the little treasures that make us special as a country, a culture, and a people," Najib said.

And more are in store on the tourism front that should please visitors to the country.

"The government intends to make Malaysia a more desirable holiday destination for both

local and foreign tourists," vowed Najib.

He alluded to the Tourism Action Plan for Langkawi which he launched in December last year, which aims to turn the resort island into a popular destination on par with Seychelles, Mauritius, and Bali, to name a few.

The plan hopes to create 4,200 new job opportunities and generate up to RM3.8 billion in income for the island off the coast of northern Malaysia from three million tourist arrivals by 2015.

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