

Enjoy nation's 'treasures', says PM
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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysians should learn to appreciate the little "treasures" in their lives that make the country unique to foreigners.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak wrote on his 1Malaysia blog yesterday that the very things Malaysians took for granted were the ones that people missed most when living overseas.

Citing examples of teh tarik sessions at mamak shops, pasar malam and local fruits like durian and langsung, he said these were the elements that made us unique as Malaysians.

"When I travel abroad and interact with Malaysians living overseas, they always cite these things that they take for granted as the very things they miss.

"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 our reach."

Najib also expressed his pleasure with the acknowledgement from the New York Times, which listed Malacca as one of the "must-see" places of this year.

"As a state steeped in history and culture, not to mention a gastronomic delight, we can all agree that Malacca is deserving of the praise."

The NYT had written that "with its lantern-lighted canals and silent, narrow streets lined with decades-old ornate temples and shop houses, few places in Southeast Asia conjure romantic images of the past as effectively as Malacca, Malaysia's oldest city".

Najib said sometimes, a foreigner's perspective help to remind us of the very elements that made Malaysia unique.

He said more Malaysians were opting for local holiday destinations, especially households with a monthly income between RM1,001 and RM3,000.

He said the government intended to make Malaysia a more desirable holiday destination for local and foreign tourists.

"Last December, I launched the tourism action plan for Langkawi, which aims to turn the island into a popular destination on par with Seychelles, Mauritius and Bali."

Najib said the plan aimed to create 4,200 new jobs and generate up to RM3.8 billion in income for the island, from three million tourist arrivals by 2015.

"The next time you enjoy teh tarik, attend a wedding or visit your relatives in kampung, I hope you take in your surroundings anew."

Najib also encouraged Malaysians to tweet him photos of unique Malaysian scenes.

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