

Najib interacts with Tamil listeners of THR Raaga
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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said he hoped to see vast improvement in the status and welfare of the Indian community in the next five years.

In an hour-long interview with Tamil radio station, THR Raaga, yesterday, Najib said he also wanted to see the Indian community fully integrate into the mainstream economic development.

"It is really my hope that in the next five years, we will see the improvement of the Indian community and, hopefully, we can work together to achieve the government's vision of a becoming a high-income nation by 2020," he told listeners of the station's Kalakkal Kaalai breakfast show.

Najib also shared what the government had done for the community in the last three years.

In the past three years, he said the government had allocated RM440 million to fund development programmes in Tamil schools nationwide.

"We have also awarded scholarships to excellent Indian students to pursue their studies at the Master's and doctorate levels."

He said new approaches were taken in recognising and tackling problems faced by the community, even from the time when he was the deputy prime minister.

"Some of the things done include the allocation for Tamil schools, whereby it is the largest ever in our history. The latest decision, for example, is (providing) 1,000 additional places in our matriculation colleges, starting from this year. Previously, it was just 500."

Najib said this was very significant because the percentage of Indians entering universities was rather low, and he hoped that it would go up to a more acceptable level.

He also demonstrated his Tamil vocabulary with the deejays, with the few words that he had learnt.

"When I developed the 1Malaysia concept, I learned the word oru which means 'one'. I also learned words such as nambikei (trust), nam naadu (our country), nandri (thank you), vanakam (greetings) and a proverb in Tamil, Eppadai thokunum, epadai vellum, which implies great success can be achieved together."

He also participated in several games with the listeners where he answered football-related questions about his favourite team, Manchester United.

Najib also answered several light-hearted questions from listeners on how he managed stress and the daily challenges he faced as a prime minister.

"I think every job out there brings about some level of stress. I try to switch off from work when I'm at home.

"I also exercise regularly and find solace in prayers," he said.

To a question by a listener if he managed his own social networking accounts such as Facebook and Twitter, Najib said he did most of the postings.

"Sometimes, the posts are administered by my officers but I will approve and check all the contents," he said.

At the end of the interview, Najib urged all Indians to work together with other Malaysians in achieving the government's vision of a developed nation by 2020.

Among those present at the session were Astro Holdings Group chief executive officer Ralph Marshall, Astro Malaysia CEO Rohana Rozhan, AMP Radio Networks executive director Borhanuddin Osman and senior assistant vice-president of the Indian Language Business, Murugiah Vellay.

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