

Najib Launches Friends Of Barisan Nasional UK
Bernama
May 14, 2012
From Nor Faridah Abd Rashid

LONDON, May 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Monday launched the 'Friends of Barisan Nasional UK' (FBNUK) which will actively seek to promote closer ties with the United Kingdom and disseminate reliable, timely and accurate information to the Malaysian diaspora in this country.

He said he hoped that the unique group could address these issues.

"A lot has changed over the last few years, and we want to make sure you get to hear about it. Our economy has been liberalised, creating jobs and increasing the wealth of ordinary Malaysians," said Najib, who arrived here this morning with his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, for a two-day working visit.

His message to Malaysians in the UK was, "please connect more closely with Malaysia and play a bigger role in our national development, either by returning home or - less ambitiously but no less importantly - by sharing your considerable expertise with our national institutions from your base in Britain".

"There's room under the Malaysian sun for all our countrymen and women whoever they are and however they choose to contribute. Everyone has a part to play, everyone can make a difference and everyone can grow and prosper," he said when launching the FBNUK at the House of Lords, here.

Besides Rosmah, present at the event were Malaysian High Commissioner to the UK Datuk Seri Zakaria Sulong and wife Datin Hazizah Zakaria, as well as a number of British public figures such as Lord Howell of Guildford and Lord Sheikh of Cornhill.

Addressing over 100 people at the launch, Najib said: "We're still a young nation and the journey ahead is an exciting one, so I urge you, keep abreast of what's happening at home and be ready to step up and play your part."

The prime minister said he had previously mentioned that the era of 'government knows best' was well and truly over.

"The most important job of the government today is not just to listen but to truly hear the people's voice...and that means yours as well," he said.

Najib said that government services in Malaysia had been revolutionised, including improving education, developing rural infrastructure, expanding public transport, reducing poverty, cutting crime and corruption, and bringing down the cost of living.

Malaysia has also unveiled the most significant package of political reforms since its independence, he said, pointing out to the repeal of outdated security laws, implementation of new measures to enhance media freedoms and taking a range of important steps to clean up elections.

Last month, Parliament passed the Printing Presses and Publications (Amendment) Bill 2012 aimed at removing the 'absolute power' of the minister in passing or rejecting the licence for printing presses and also voted to repeal the Internal Security Act (ISA), among others.

Najib also touched on the brutal assault of Malaysian student Ashraf Haziq Rossli during the riots that rocked Britain last year.

"But we (Malaysians) were touched when, in the aftermath, thousands upon thousands of Britons expressed first their anger at the mob and then their heartfelt concern and support for Ashraf.

"And I would like to express my gratitude to everyone in Britain who reached out to this young Malaysian in his hour of need," he said.

"The incident was proof, as if any were needed, that Britain and Malaysia are united in our values -- but we're equally united in our commitment to increasing prosperity, raising living standards and building open, outward-facing economies," Najib said.

The prime minister drew the attention of his audience to the fact that ever since the East India Company first set up its regional base in Penang more than 200 years ago, Malaysia's trade links with the UK had been strong.

"And they're getting stronger, with Prime Minister (David) Cameron's visit to our country last month putting an end, in his words, to the era of 'benign neglect'," he said.

Najib also mentioned the many legacies from Britain to Malaysia and highlighted the remarks made by Malaysia's first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman back then that the "rulers had departed and returned to Malaysia not just as friends but as the best of friends".

And this, said Najib, was certainly true as Britain stood to this day as a great friend to Malaysia.

Also in attendance were FBNUK president and Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (ASLI) chief executive officer Datuk Dr Michael Yeoh, AirAsia group chief executive officer Tan Sri Tony Fernandes and Lim Kok Wing University president Tan Sri Lim Kok Wing.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2012 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v6/newsindex.php?id=666127>