

PM Tells Students To Take Advantage Of Opportunities Abroad

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WASHINGTON, May 20 (Bernama) -- Malaysian students should look at the world as a stage and take advantage of the enormous opportunities abroad, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said here following a luncheon and a Friday prayer session with students and embassy staff.

"You can maintain your roots but also have a global perspective by acquiring job experience and proficiency in several languages," Najib, who is on a private visit here, said.

He said students should take advantage of internship programmes such as the one initiated by the Malaysia-US Chamber of Commerce based here, in collaboration with Education Malaysia in Washington DC, which opens the door for Malaysian students in the U.S. to intern with Malaysian or American-owned companies in either Malaysia or in the United States over the summer to enhance their learning experience.

"Even if you work in the U.S., we won't lose you forever," he said Friday at the luncheon hosted by Ambassador Datuk Othman Hashim.

Najib was accompanied by the Malaysian Special Envoy to the U.S., Datuk Seri Dr Jamaludin Jarjis.

"My job is to create as many opportunities - beyond that, it is up to you," the prime minister told about 30 Malaysian undergraduate and graduate students currently pursuing engineering, biotech and actuarial science at Stevens Institute of Technology, New Jersey; Rutgers University, New Jersey; Temple University, Pennsylvania; and Purdue University, Indiana.

Najib and his Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor are on a private visit to attend the graduation of their son Nor Ashman Saturday.

The proud dad, in a lighter moment, recalled his rare visit to his son's dorm room in Washington DC, where he was "horrified" when he did not see any books.

Noting his father's concern, Nor Ashman calmed him by reminding him that he did not need many books because he can read them digitally, and that the proof would be in the results.

As many proud parents would do, Najib happily reported that his 21-year-old son surpassed his expectations by completing his Bachelor's degree in International Affairs with Magna cum Laude honours and an above average CGPA of 3.71 from Georgetown University.

The prime minister also touched on the 1Malaysia concept, and emphasised that it was not merely a slogan but an initiative to make Malaysia inclusive - that Malaysia was not only for a particular ethnic group or religion, but for all Malaysians.

He updated Malaysian students on several development projects in Malaysia, including the Refinery & Petrochemical Integrated Development (RAPID) complex launched by Petronas in Pengerang, Johor, in addition to a petrochemical complex undertaken by a Taiwanese company, which is expected to create some 5,000 jobs on a permanent basis and an

additional 5,000 jobs on a contractual basis.

Najib also spoke of the River of Life (RoL) beautification project aimed at transforming the Klang and Gombak rivers into vibrant and liveable waterfronts and to increase the economic viability of the area.

"We have to make the cake bigger and redistribute it to all Malaysians," he pointed out, adding that the Malaysian economy was improving and the government last year collected RM26 billion in tax revenue following assertive measures to collect taxes.

The improving economy has permitted the government to provide financial assistance of RM500 to some four million households earning less than RM3,000 per month.

On politics, Najib expressed his disappointment over the Bersih 3.0 rally, describing it as "not so bersih" (peaceful) after having been hijacked by parties with their own agenda to create the perception of instability in the country.

He said the unruly protesters had refused the government's offer of a suitable venue and then broke the law, which resulted in the situation escalating into violence and chaos where even police officers were assaulted.

Najib compared this with the massive Umno rally held at the Bukit Jalil National Stadium where more than 100,000 people gathered peacefully and without any untoward incident.

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