

Najib's Gawai Visit Seen As Boost For Sarawak-Federal Ties
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JULAU (Sarawak), June 2 (Bernama) -- The visit of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to two longhouses here and a community hall in Betong Sunday coinciding with the "Gawai Dayak" harvest festival is seen as consolidating the already strong ties between the Dayak community in Sarawak and the federal leadership.

Deputy Information Communication and Culture Minister Datuk Joseph Salang said Najib's visit would make the Dayaks feel important because the prime minister is making the trip during the festival. Najib will be accompanied by Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud.

Salang spoke to reporters this evening after a final check on the preparations for Najib's visit. Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS) is hosting the Gawai open house tomorrow at the Jana anak Saweng longhouse here.

He also said that the gesture by Najib indicated that the prime minister walked the talk because he went down to the ground to meet the people all over the country.

"It does not matter where they come from or who they are. He is really propagating the 1Malaysia spirit," he said.

Salang said the personal visits were significant because the longhouse communities here have long been practising the essence of the 1Malaysia spirit where inter-racial marriages were common.

He also said that since independence, the community had always been supportive of both the federal and state governments.

Asked whether Najib would announce any Gawai goodies for the community, Salang said they were not expecting anything.

"We are just celebrating our Gawai. If he feels generous enough to dish out some goodies, it will be much welcomed by the Dayaks," he said.

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