

**Government Emphasises Understanding And Unity Of Race And Religion - Najib
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JOHOR BAHRU, June 5 (Bernama) - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak says the government emphasises understanding and unity of race and religion especially when it involves fellow Muslims.

He said the government had never closed cooperation and negotiation with individuals, parties or non-governmental organisations.

"We also don't impose conditions as Muslims and the people are our priority compared to the interest of certain groups.

"Closing the door of understanding and negotiation will make Muslims lose out. We will end up like Pak Pandir who won applause but lost the kampung.

"When this happens, the loss will not only be the kampung but also the religion," he said when opening 55th National Quran Recital Competition at Persada Johor International Convention Centre here Monday night.

The ceremony was also attended by the prime minister's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom.

He said that the theme "Unity The Foundation Of Unity" is in line with Allah's 'firman' in verse 13 of 'surah al-Hujurat'.

The verse called on Muslims irrespective of race and ancestry to know each other and establish a good understanding as well as strengthen ties.

"The government is always trying to strengthen unity and understanding through the 1Malaysia Concept."

Islam has been enshrined in the constitution as official religion and religion of the federation.

"The government always uphold the agenda to champion Islam since achieving independence," said Najib.

He expressed surprise with some people who made the holy land as venue to express their sentiments on the order of certain parties and condemned them for tarnishing the country's good image.

A total of 27 reciters from all states, except Kelantan which did not a female reciter, will recite the Quran over five days starting Monday night.

Monday night saw two contestants, namely Abdul Khair Jalil of Selangor and Sarina Che Yahya of Perlis reciting the Quran.

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