

Aim for higher thinking

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NEW CHALLENGE: Youths must be able to discern fact from mere perception

SHAH ALAM: YOUTHS must be trained to have higher thinking skills so that they can differentiate between fact and baseless perception created by certain groups through the Internet and social media.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the 21st century presented different challenges for youths, and academic qualifications alone were no longer enough.

"We have to train our children to have higher thinking skills that are not based on emotions, so that they will not simply accept everything, and be able to discern fact from baseless perception.

"In the past, people would resort to penning surat layang (poison pen letters) to launch personal attacks on leaders.

"And they even had to post it from a different location to prevent detection.

"These days, while the intent is still the same, modern mediums like the Internet and social media are used by certain quarters, and (attacks) can be spread in real time," he said in his keynote address at the Malaysian Young Thinkers Convention here, yesterday.

Najib said Malaysia did not need leaders who only had good "acting" and oratory skills, who attacked other leaders but did not have the courage to swear to God to defend themselves, and who claimed everything was a political conspiracy.

He said the younger generation should assess the government's achievements and not base their judgment on political rhetoric.

"Please don't think that just because we are the government, everything we do is wrong.

"If we did, Malaysia won't be as developed as it is today."

Najib said no other country had a detailed transformation plan like Malaysia and the government had even gone a step further to use blue ocean strategies to find ways to do more for the people at minimum cost, but yielding maximum results, citing the country's first urban transformation centre in Malacca where 70 federal and state agencies are under the same roof, as an example.

He said Malaysians should realise that far from being a failed state, Malaysia was deemed a success story by other countries.

"If we look back at Malaysia's journey for the past 55 years, the government we have today has led Malaysia to achieve many successes so much so that we are considered a success story everyone can be proud of."

At the same time, Najib pointed out that the government had never made promises it could not keep, such as abolishing the National Higher Education Fund Corporation loans, but instead had done all it could to help the poor and improve the people's quality of life.

"What is wrong in paying back little by little as our income grows so that other youths have a chance to further their studies in universities?"

"If they are too poor, the government, through Universiti Teknologi Mara has provided free education for 5,000 students from poor families.

He said real change could not be achieved through unruly street demonstrations which would not benefit anyone.

"This (street demonstrations) is not upholding democracy, but promotes 'demo-crazy' by causing chaos.

He also announced that he would soon launch a 1Malaysia bookshop and a 1Malaysia textile shop which would sell products that were cheaper than other commercial stores. Present were Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam, Agriculture and Agro-based Minister Datuk Seri Noh Omar, Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek and Deputy Health Minister Datuk Rosnah Rashid Shirlin.

Meanwhile, in his speech at the Girl Guides Association of Malaysia (GGAM) Youth Expressions programme at Stadium Negara in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, Najib said Malaysian youth could look forward to a bright future due to the plans and policies put in place by the government.

He also said the leadership was committed to doing its best for the future generations as youth were an investment for the nation.

"Malaysian youth are lucky as Malaysia is a peaceful and harmonious country and they can be optimistic about what is in store for them in the future.

"We can see in countries such as those in north Africa and Europe where there is 40 per cent unemployment rate and the youth there are unsure about their fate."

He noted that uniformed bodies such as the Girl Guides played an important role in developing and inculcating life and leadership skills among the future generation.

"I'm glad to see that Girl Guides are very dedicated and committed towards contributing to the community.

"I'm also proud to see that the young people here personify the very spirit of 1Malaysia," he said to cheers from the crowd.

Earlier, Najib and his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, who were in Boy Scouts and Girl Guides uniforms respectively, rode a buggy and greeted hundreds of Girl Guides from all over Malaysia.

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