

**Malaysia Moving Towards Becoming Vibrant Democracy - Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 6 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Malaysia is moving towards becoming a more mature and vibrant democracy with the government taking steps to allow the public to exercise their fundamental rights.

Najib, speaking in an interview with 'CNBC Conversation' hosted by renowned anchor Martin Soong that was aired on Astro CNBC (Channel 518) today, said a series of protests against the government and the decline in the approval ratings of him and his Barisan Nasional coalition recently, showed Malaysia was no different from other countries.

"You know, you have demonstrations in America, Europe, Japan, Korea, even Hong Kong. Is that something unusual? It's not.

"In fact, political transformation is part of my promise to the people, that we are moving towards a more mature and vibrant democracy in this country," he said.

Najib cited the replacement of the Internal Security Act 1960 with the Peaceful Assembly Act as one of the government's move to tell the people that it was their right to express their opinions.

"It's your right, your fundamental right to protest and we'll not prevent that, but do it in a peaceful manner and I think that this is healthy," he said.

Najib said he did not consider reacting to the public's opinions in a strident way but stressed that the government did listen to what the people were protesting about and tried to address the reasonable ones.

Asked whether concerns raised by certain quarters of the public were reasonable, Najib said: "Some are reasonable."

He cited the Lynas issue as an example, saying much concern was raised by the people about safety but some of it was not based on facts.

"So we went all the way, we went the extra mile to really make sure that the (Lynas) plant will be safe for the people. We've never done as much as we've done in the case of the Lynas issue, and we are satisfied," he said.

The plant based in Gebeng, Kuantan is for processing rare earths.

However, Najib said democracy always had a downside where the opposition tried to spin things in a very negative way.

"But then, that's democracy. You just have to manage it. And I don't blame them (the opposition) for it because that's the name of the game," he said.

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