

Preserve religious and racial harmony, says Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 2 — Malaysians must preserve racial and religious harmony by continuing to respect one another, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said today.

He expressed his disappointment with unnamed parties who he said raised sensitive issues to gain cheap political mileage ahead of the coming general election.

“In order to maintain harmony, we must be sensitive and respect each other’s race and religious sensitivities either through our words or actions,” Najib (**picture**) was quoted as saying by The Star Online, in his opening address during the Federal Territories Day 2013 celebration at the Kuala Lumpur Football Stadium in Bandar Tun Razak today.

Muslim and Christian leaders here have been at loggerheads over use of the Arabic word “Allah”, with the former claiming that it refers exclusively to the Islamic God.

The Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) have also upset church leaders with its sermons for the two consecutive Fridays, first warning Muslims nationwide of “enemies of Islam” that would try to confuse them into believing that all religions share the same god.

The federal Islamic agency adopted a slightly softer tone in its sermon yesterday in conjunction with the United Nation’s World Interfaith Harmony Week — which is also celebrated in Malaysia — telling Muslims nationwide to respect non-Muslims, but continued urging them to compromise their faith in tolerating other beliefs.

Independent MP Datuk Ibrahim Ali had sparked a firestorm last month when he threatened to burn copies of Malay-language bibles in response to a DAP lawmaker’s call for Putrajaya to lift a long-standing ban on the holy book that is widely-used by Christian Bumiputeras in Sabah and Sarawak.

Najib, who is also the finance minister, announced an additional RM5 million 1 Federal Territory Security Fund, aimed to boost security around the housing areas in the Federal Territories.

“We realise that the safety and security of the public is one of the main issues and we will support any initiatives to reduce crime,” he was reported saying.

Despite the government’s claims to have succeeded in cutting down crime, the public remains unconvinced after a spate of robberies, assaults and missing persons drew question marks over government statistics showing a significant drop in the country’s crime rate.

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