

Indians Appreciate Najib's Helping Hand
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KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- Indians in the country are grateful to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak for his unwavering commitment in settling many of the community's woes, especially those relating to citizenship documents.

Najib's initiative and earnestness in getting to the bottom of the community's problems have put the prime minister and the Barisan Nasional (BN) government in favourable light.

Moreover, he has provided a greater recognition to the community by stating that Indians have a place in the Malaysian sun, and that they play an important role in the 1Malaysia concept.

GETTING TO THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

Realising that the community is faced with many complex issues, especially those relating to identity and citizenship documentation, Najib has established the Special Implementation Task Force (SITF), under the Prime Minister's Department, which is dedicated to solving many of the outstanding woes.

SITF rolled out the MyDaftar campaign to address issues related to birth certificates, marriage registration and citizenship.

SITF stands testament to Najib's earnestness and commitment to helping Indians out of their predicament.

SEEING THE LIGHT OF DAY

Through the MyDaftar campaign launched in February 2011, Amjelea Gopal is among the 15,000 people from the community who has benefited from Najib and the BN government's generosity.

Amjelea's 40-year wait to obtain an identity card (IC) ended when Najib personally handed over the document to her on April 4 at a function at Sentul Perdana here.

Speaking to Bernama, Amjelea, 67, said it was a great relief to finally obtain the important document and thanked Najib and the government for the help extended.

"It was an exciting and memorable moment, especially when I had been trying to get the document for four decades. My gratitude goes to Datuk Seri Najib," said Amjelea, who hails from Klang.

Amjelea has been through a tough time bringing up her four children as she had no IC, and so, no one wanted to employ her on a regular basis. She could only earn a living doing odd jobs - washing clothes and cleaning homes.

"Life was so difficult then, since my husband left me 32 years ago; no one wanted to employ me as they were doubtful over my citizenship status. I used to cry every day, but

now, I can afford to smile as my prayers have been answered, with God sending the PM as the angel to help me," she said.

MORE INDIANS SEEING NEW HOPE

As for Mariamma Ramasamy, 82, her long wait too ended when the Registration Department issued her an IC, under the MyDaftar campaign.

"I'm grateful to the people who have helped me," noted the Seremban, Negeri Sembilan-born housewife.

Valiamah Manickam, 61, from Kampung Pandan here, blamed her predicament on her own callousness. She had failed to collect her blue IC that was issued 18 years ago, but this time, she got it through the MyDaftar campaign.

Chellachi Nadarajah, 57, from Selayang, too was happy with her blue IC.

"I have been holding a red IC for more than four decades. Finally, through MyDaftar, I received my blue IC on Feb 14, 2012, right from the prime minister himself," she said.

SITF's chairman, Datuk Seri Dr S.Subramaniam, who is also MIC's Deputy President, noted that in the first phase, since the launch of the MyDaftar campaign, 9,529 applications for ICs have been received.

THOUSANDS OF INDIANS HAVE BENEFITTED SO FAR

Based on the total, 6,590 applications have been approved in less than a year, with 4,023 of them being citizenship applicants, he said.

In the second phase (from Feb 18 to March 2, 2013), more than 4,000 people registered, and 1,500 of them were Indians.

Dr Subramaniam, who is also the Human Resource Minister, said the government has been working with NGOs representing the community, among others, the Development of Human Resources for Rural Areas (DHRRA Malaysia) and Helping Hands.

With the cooperation of NGOs, G.Kumaran and P.Shanti, both in their 40s, finally received the MyKad and birth certificates for their children.

"Now, we can send our children to school and take them to clinics. Now, there is no reason to ask help from others. Our lives are much easier now. Thank you, Prime Minister Najib," said Kumaran.

NAJIB RECEIVES RECOGNITION FROM UN

Dr Subramaniam pointed out that the MyDaftar campaign managed to get the attention of the United Nations, which recognised the programme that provides valid documents to its citizens as a benevolent deed of the government.

On claims by some political parties and NGOs that up to 300,000 Indians in the country are without identification documents or citizenship, he said there is no truth in this.

He also pointed out that opposition parties have submitted 308 applications for identity

documents, with 280 of them applying for red IC and not for citizenship.

The Home Affairs Ministry's website indicates that a total of 62,604 citizenship applications had been pending from 1997 to 2009, with about 27,500 people given citizenship.

Apart from this, the ministry has managed to solve 109,044 late registration applications that had been pending from 2005 to 2009.

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