

**PM: Chinese community an integral part of nation**  
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**By ISABELLE LAI**

PETALING JAYA: Chinese New Year, the most important festival in the Lunar calendar, serves as a reminder of the Chinese community's importance to Malaysia, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said he could not imagine a Malaysia lacking Chinese culture, which was so tightly interwoven into society.

"My father, the late Tun Abdul Razak, was very clear on his stance towards the Chinese community who have helped in the development of our country in many ways since we achieved independence. And I share in his vision," he said in his Chinese New Year message on his blog [www.1malaysia.com.my](http://www.1malaysia.com.my).

Najib said that this enthusiasm had been passed down to another generation his son Ashman, who speaks fluent Mandarin.

Wishing *Gong Xi Fa Cai* and Happy Chinese New Year to the Chinese, he said he was looking forward to having some *yee sang*, which he described as a "truly marvellous dish" and is a symbol of good luck, prosperity and health.

On the Barisan Nasional Government's support towards the Chinese community, Najib said he understood the importance of having open channels to better understand the needs of the community.

"Through my Ah Jib Gor Facebook page alone, we sifted through many suggestions which have formed part of the basis of Budget 2013," he added.

Education, said Najib, was an area of real importance for the Government, as shown by its additional RM100mil allocation in the Budget for national-type Chinese schools.

"This is on top of the RM100mil given last year under the Special Fund for the Building, Improvement and Maintenance of Schools to national-type Chinese schools," he said, adding that it would go toward refurbishing buildings and buying new equipment.

He said the Government was also aiming to increase the number of Chinese language teachers to meet student demand via the National Education Blueprint.

Najib added that the top students of Chinese secondary schools had also been given scholarships.

"There is much more work for us to do in 2013 and I am looking forward to seeing how much more we can help to support the Chinese community. It is my hope that the Chinese community will continue to support the Government towards this goal," he said.

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