

Najib makes historic visit to Dong Zong open house
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KAJANG: Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak made a historic appearance at the Chinese New Year open house of the United Chinese School Committees Association of Malaysia (Dong Zong) here when he became the first Prime Minister to grace the event since the association was formed in 1954.

Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim also came to the function but both of them arrived at different times and did not meet face-to-face yesterday.

The hosts feted Najib and Anwar separately with festive delicacies and cultural performances, and not missing the traditional *yee sang* toss to symbolise abundance, prosperity and good health.

Najib arrived at 9.45am and was greeted with *I Love PM* banners held by well-wishers.

He spent about 40 minutes at the event, accompanied by MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek, his deputy Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai and Gerakan president Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

Anwar came at about 11am with an entourage that included DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang and PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar.

Dong Zong president Yap Sin Tian said Najib's visit was an indication of his "inclusive leadership" and showed that the Prime Minister was concerned about the well-being of Chinese education.

Najib conveyed to them that he was willing to meet them soon, said Yap. In its invitation to Najib, the association had posed three issues for his attention recognition for the Unified Examination Certificate, setting up of more Chinese independent schools and a review of the National Education Blueprint.

"He suggested we have a meeting after the Chinese New Year to discuss and follow up on these issues," Yap said.

In **KUALA LUMPUR**, Najib told a crowd attending another Chinese New Year event that strong collaboration between the corporate sector and the Government had brought about long periods of stability.

This had allowed Malaysia to achieve steady progress, he said at the Genting Group Chinese New Year open house.

"We do not want spectacular progress that is not sustainable and we certainly do not want regression which will be bad for us.

"What we want is steady progress," he said, adding that "the best is yet to come".

In his speech, Genting Group chairman and chief executive Tan Sri Lim Kok Thay commended Najib for creating a conducive environment for businesses in Malaysia to thrive.

"As far as Malaysia is concerned, he (Najib) is the Number One brand ambassador," he said, adding that the Prime Minister's initiatives had helped open new markets for local businesses to expand globally.

At another event earlier, Lim announced that the Genting Group had made contributions totalling RM2mil to 101 welfare, charitable and community-based organisations to mark the festive celebrations.

Besides this, he said, the group's Community Chest donated RM100mil to over 300 schools nationwide for repairs, renovations and construction.

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