

## **Indian Community Has To Appreciate Najib's Direct Approach To Solve Their Woes**

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KUALA LUMPUR, May 3 (Bernama) -- Since taking office as Malaysia's sixth prime minister in 2009, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's personal approach in reaching out to the Indian community has to be taken as a serious indicator to evaluate and appreciate his sincerity.

Najib's proactive ways to win the "hearts and minds" of the Indian community with his continuous visits to the ground and frequent walkabouts to meet the people at the grassroots, shows the government is very serious now than before, after the community expressed their dissatisfaction and frustration with the Barisan nasional (BN) government through the ballot papers in the last general election in 2008.

Najib had openly admitted that the BN government had made mistakes in the past and promised to work hard from the lessons learnt when attending the national-level Deepavali celebrations at SMK Kampung Jawa in Klang in November 2011.

His pledge not to take Indians' support for granted was proven by his initiative to form a Special Task Force for Indian Affairs to address the community's problems and issues such as welfare aid, jobs and citizenship.

Realising the importance of understanding Indians' culture and needs better, Najib started to attend more cultural programmes such as "Ponggal" (Indians' Harvest Festival) celebrations for three years continuously since 2011 in Kapar, Merdeka Square and Klang.

Adding to the record for a first time in history, he also started to "blend" deeper with the four major Indian ethnic groups comprising Tamils, Malayalees, Telegus and Sikhs by attending their cultural events.

Last year, during his visit to 1Malaysia Vaisakhi Open House at Merdeka Square, Najib gave the Sikh civil servants a "gift" by announcing that they can take unrecorded leave to attend Vaisakhi celebrations, which fall on April 14 every year.

Amanjit Singh, 36, working as an executive in a government agency, said Najib's tacit approval to take leave was very meaningful and the happiest "gift" for Malaysian Sikhs.

"We feel the prime minister has acknowledged our culture eventhough we are a minority in this country. It shows Najib is really implementing the 1Malaysia concept in this multiracial country.

"I sincerely feel the Indian community should appreciate what he has done for us and give him the mandate to continue serving the nation for our betterment," he told Bernama.

In a philosopher's language, Najib's leadership perfectly suits himself in the saying by a famous writer, Ken Kesey, who said "You don't lead by pointing and telling people some place to go, you lead by going to that place and making a case'.

Besides understanding the culture, Najib's "heart and mind" were also with the Indian community as they needed serious attention, especially in the Kampung Buah Pala case in Penang.

The dreams of the 20 Indian families from the village to have their own house was realised when the BN government honoured its promise by handing the house keys in June last year.

In April last year, Najib met Kampung Buah Pala residents in a dialogue with Penang Indians non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and handed replicas of the keys to the residents' representatives.

Kampung Buah Pala was demolished on Sept 14, 2009 to make way for a project.

Describing Najib as the most humble prime minister, A. Thangarasu, 52, said the Indians should take cognisance of Najib's direct involvement without intermediaries such as MIC, PPP and NGOs (NGO) that he was really sincere in helping the villagers to live in decent homes.

"We are fortunate to have a leader like Najib to helm the nation. I think the Indians are also happy with him for listening to our problems and promptly taking remedial measures," he said.

The businessman urged Indians to give Najib their full support in line with the prime minister's clarion call to have "Nambikei" (trust) in BN to improve their quality of living.

"We should think about our future, he is sincere to us, so let's support his plans and programmes to help him to help us enhance our living standard," he said.

On Najib's acceptance of the blueprint for the Indians submitted by the Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf), A. Vinod Kumar, 27, said this showed the Hindraf leaders had realised that the government had started to serve the Indian community better.

"Last time, the Indians, especially the younger generation, were angry that the government ignored their legitimate rights but now things have changed for the better.

"Looking at the understanding between the government and Hindraf, I think we are having a perfect leader in Najib.

"I appeal to Indian voters to take cognisance of the change in the government's approach towards the community when casting their ballots on Sunday," he added.

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