

Najib weighs in on religious space - no move to Muslim orthodox state
Malaysian Insider
Aug 21 , 2013
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In a climate of increasing anxiousness among non-Muslims about freedom of religion, the Prime Minister weighed in today with the assurance that Malaysia is not moving towards an Orthodox Muslim state.

His statement comes on the eve of the court date to hear the Catholic church's move to challenge a government ban on the word, "Allah" to describe god in the church newspaper, the Herald.

Malay rights group Perkasa has threatened to hold a rally in Putrajaya to support the government ban and called on Muslims to join in.

Today's statement by Datuk Seri Najib Razak is his first on the subject of religious space since several events recently which have raised concerns among non-Muslims on the direction the country is taking.

In past weeks, the authorities have taken action against a Muslim dog trainer for an old video, as well as against a Johor resort owner for allowing Buddhists to meditate in a surau.

Najib said it's important for Malaysians to understand each other, especially over religious issues.

"Non-Muslims too have their degree of sensitivity and so, it is important to understand the sensitivities of all," he told reporters today at the Hari Raya open house hosted by the Prime Minister's Department in Putrajaya. He was responding to a question on whether the country was moving towards Muslim orthodoxy. - August 21, 2013.

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