

Social Media Fosters 1Malaysia Spirit

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KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- The social media today controls the world of communications.

Families and friends use them to reconnect, maintain connections, hold meetings and organise events.

Even the heads of states today have their own social media page, and use it to reach out to their people.

The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak himself has dedicated Facebook, Twitter and blog pages to help open more channels of communications with the people.

Some believe that social media networks have the power to even foster interracial relations, thus strengthening the 1Malaysia spirit.

SMARTPHONES CONNECT PEOPLE

A social science undergraduate from the International Islamic University Malaysia Khairun Nizam Hosen, 23, said that smartphones help in forging friendship among the races in Malaysia.

The proliferation of social media apps can be attributed to the advent of smartphones.

"Smartphones have become somewhat of a must among young people, regardless of race, due to their need to constantly remain connected with others. Its use is made easy with the availability of WiFis in many public places nowadays," he said.

He said the 1Malaysia spirit is nurtured on social networks due to the platforms' ability to garner support towards a common cause.

A private sector worker, Vishnu Morgan, 30, said the technological revolution not only aided communication but also improved the social system.

"Applications like Facebook not only allows us to track down old school friends, but can be used to build businesses," he said.

Vishnu said the variety of communicational technologies today could easily be used as a medium to nurture interracial unity in Malaysia.

AVOID RACIAL DEBATES

On the other hand, as a platform that allows multiple users to communicate instantaneously, social media have also availed a kind of freedom that sometimes results in irresponsible speech.

Yong Cheng Yun, 28, said some users took the opportunity to spread false information that can threaten the peace and harmony of a society or nation.

He called on the people to be calm and rational when confronted with controversial information that could potentially cause disunity or unrest between the races.

"Preserving the country's peace and security is our joint responsibility," he said.

Yong who hails from Raub, Pahang, said the social media could be used to foster interracial unity by organising social activities online, such as marathons or blood donation drives.

REMAIN CALM AND RATIONAL

Meanwhile, Norisuwanah Jaffar, 28, did not deny that every citizen had the right and freedom of speech.

However, the lass from Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, said it did not mean they could voice out opinions without considering its effect on the country's peace and security.

"Malaysia is a developing country. Its people should be able to think for the long term and protect the nation's image," she added.

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