

**Government Committed To Work Together With Indian Community Based On 'Nambikei' - PM Bernama
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 2 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak on Monday reiterated the government's commitment to stand by the Indian community and work together based on nambikei (trust) towards overcoming the challenges faced by the community.

The Prime Minister said the government is also committed to help the Indian community in achieving the success the community strives for.

Najib said this in his message in conjunction with the Thaipusam celebration tomorrow in his blog www.najibrazak.com.

"As our Hindu brothers and sisters observe this day by offering prayers of thanksgiving and fulfilling their vows at temples throughout the country, let us come together in solidarity to show our respect for each other's religious festivals," he said.

Najib said: "As the Malaysian Hindus mark the auspicious festival of Thaipusam, we are, once again reminded of our rich and diverse culture.

"As Malaysians, we are indeed blessed that people of different faiths and ethnicities live together in peace and harmony."

Thaipusam will be celebrated tomorrow nationwide. More than three million devotees, spectators and tourists, both local and foreign, are expected to converge at a few hot spots among them Batu Caves in Selangor and Waterfall Road in George Town, Penang.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin said Malaysia was fortunate that the majority of the people adopted a rational attitude even though there were elements out to destroy unity and cause racial discord in the country.

"We are also thankful because the people support the government's efforts to preserve the peace in the country using existing laws," he said in a statement in conjunction with Thaipusam.

On Thaipusam, Muhyiddin said he hoped Malaysian Hindus would further intensify efforts to enhance racial harmony, unity and patriotism besides contributing to national development and the people's wellbeing.

He said Thaipusam like other major festivals could be celebrated full of joy by not only Hindus but all Malaysians who loved peace, harmony and multi-racial unity.

He said large scale religious celebrations in the country were the manifestation of freedom of religion practised by the government and the people.

"Although Islam is recognised as the official religion of the federation and Muslims form the majority of the population, it does not negate the freedom of others to practise their own faiths.

"It is also the same with language, culture and customs. Each community is free to practice their own language, culture and customs without any restrictions," he said.

Muhyiddin said although this was taken for granted, these freedoms must be valued by Malaysians in this blessed land.

"In some contries, minorities are discriminated and their rights trampled on.

"But this does not happen in Malaysia. The rights and freedoms are protected by the Constitution and the country's laws," he said.

He said Malaysia was very blessed because of the tolerant nature of its multi-racial people which has been the case since the very beginning and had brought about the desired unity and harmony.

"This formula has been accepted since Merdeka (Independence). Its effectiveness is proven because Malaysia is a success story," he said.

Meanwhile, MIC President Datuk Seri G. Palanivel in his Thaipusam message urged those who are offering prayers of thanksgiving and fulfilling vows at temples to do so with calm and orderliness, given the big crowds expected at major temples like in Batu Caves, Penang and Ipoh.

He hoped devotees going to temples for prayers follow the guidelines set by the temple authorities to avoid unwanted incidents.

"I would like to take this opportunity to wish all devotees in Malaysia and all over the world a blessed Thaipusam," he said.

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