

PM: Easy to criticise, but running diverse Malaysia not that simple

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By Ida Lim

Datuk Seri Najib Razak speaks at the 2016 Perdana Felo presentation ceremony at ICU Briefing Hall, Prime Minister's Department in Putrajaya, June 29, 2016. – Picture by Yusof Mat Isa

PUTRAJAYA, June 29 — It is easy for outsiders to criticise the federal government but the actual task of running an administration in a country as diverse in Malaysia is not that easy, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said today.

Najib said only a person from within the administration would know how to appreciate the challenge of running a multiracial, multireligious and multilingual country like Malaysia.

“That’s why when we join the Perdana Fellows programme, we know that in the administration of a country, in a country that is so diverse like Malaysia, it is a complex challenge.

“It is not as easy as we view from the outside. If we view it from the outside, it may be easy for us to give our views or to criticise,” Najib said in a speech today at the handover of participants of the Perdana Fellows 2016 programme to ministers.

Najib stressed that there are “no easy choices in government” and gave the example of his administration's decision to take the unpopular move to remove fuel subsidies instead of keeping oil prices low.

“But if we don't increase the fuel price, we have to use subsidies, when we use subsidies, people don't realise it is public funds,” he said, adding that such public funds could be used for projects to develop the country instead.

Najib said the Perdana Fellows programme will enable its participants to understand considerations made by the government before making decisions, adding that he hoped ministers would look for value-adding input from these youths.

Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin later told reporters that the participants of the programme were handpicked based on their good academic and leadership record, as well as their essays containing proposals to improve government policies.

According to Khairy, the Perdana Fellows programme is in its fourth year, with 10 per cent of the 235 participants from previous batches entering into civil service after the end of their internship with the ministers, while 40 per cent resumed their studies and 50 per cent joined the private sector including government-linked companies and government agencies such as Bank Negara Malaysia and the Securities Commission.

This year's 82 participants come from 52 local and foreign universities, with 67 per cent and 33 per cent of those selected being male and female participants respectively.

Najib also said earlier that this will be the first year where the Perdana Fellows will receive training from 16 corporate partners in the form of “structured bootcamps”, with the partners including Petronas, Khazanah Nasional, Bursa Malaysia, CIMB, Teach for Malaysia, Ernst & Young.

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