

Use Internet and Social Media to Promote Unity - Najib

Bernama

Feb 26, 2016

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 26 (Bernama) -- Malaysians should continue to use the internet and social media as a platform to promote unity and prevent it from being hijacked, said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

"Malaysians should use the internet for the greater good, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure that our unity and harmony is preserved, after all, we are 1Malaysia.

"The internet is not only a powerful tool that can both shape and dismantle a society, but also a great space for discourse to take place, the Prime Minister said in his latest posting on his blog NajibRazak.com tonight titled " Netizens for the greater good."

Relating his recent meeting with Malaysians who had dedicated their time to doing their part to create a better Malaysia, Najib said these remarkable Malaysians have one thing in common, "they use their influence online for the greater good."

Najib said he met with Dr Raja Shamri or "Hero Banjir", who has inspired the nation when his flood relief efforts in 2014 went viral, radio presenter and ambassador of Organ Donation Revathy Bawadas Kumar as well as former policeman Kuan Chee Heng, who now leads the 95,000-member strong Community Policing Malaysia by bringing Malaysians together to keep the communities safe.

He also met up with Dr Aznil Hisham, a radiologist at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Hospital (HUKM) who sparked conversation on fostering unity with his online followers in his spare time, and Dr Teh Su Thye who is chief executive officer of Global Peace Foundation and committee member to Promote Interfaith Understanding and Harmony.

"Their work has caught the attention of thousands of followers, inspiring them to keep their optimism and belief in our beloved country.

"We must not allow this optimism and belief to be tainted by a few bad apples. Like me, they too, are staunch believers of 1Malaysia," he said.

Najib said a true testament to Malaysian unity was when Malaysia faced its toughest year in 2014 after the country was hit with the worst flood in decades, and when the MH370 and MH17 tragedies struck.

"There was an overwhelming sense of togetherness that had cut through the political, race and religious divide," he said.

Najib said the country's netizens became the main driver for collective relief efforts and hastags were created to spread words of encouragement.

"The social media became a part of the nation's support system. It was one of the few moments where the online and reality worlds were aligned to serve a greater cause. It was a reflection of who we really are as a nation," he said.

Najib said the battle of perception will be a continuous one, and the internet is an open space for the voices of the people.

"But it is up to us to stay true to the path of moderation and not fall prey to the misconstrued agenda of irresponsible users," he said, adding that the internet users must be able to differentiate truths, half-truths, lies and opinion before forming their own judgment.

"We must be more cautious when sharing information on social media since the internet is a shared property owned collectively by all global citizens, and as such, we have the responsibility not to misuse it," he said.

He said unfortunately, sometimes, technology was abused to incite racism or religious intolerance instead.

"Keyboards warriors, cyber troopers and even news portals have made the online world their playground, constructing their own version of "reality" with click bait headlines that serve their own agendas. This is an unhealthy practice in journalism," he added.

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