

TN50: People want unity schools, work-home balance
Free Malaysia Today
May 31, 2017

PM Najib Razak says he envisages the formation of national schools that can build unity at an early stage.

PUTRAJAYA: Single-stream schools, work-family life balance and an improved public transportation system were among the suggestions voiced by civil servants at a National Transformation 2050 (TN50) dialogue with the prime minister today.

When summarising the participants' aspirations and suggestions that were described as stimulating, Prime Minister Najib Razak said he envisaged the formation of national schools that could build unity at an early stage.

He said that among the characteristics of such schools were making Bahasa Melayu the medium of instruction, boosting the proficiency of the English language, making Tamil, Mandarin and Arabic strong electives, providing quality education as well as a multi-racial composition of teachers and students.

Najib said he was not suggesting these but was envisaging the characteristics of schools from which multiracial unity could begin.

However, he added, this was a very sensitive matter, a political land mine, as Malaysia had different school streams.

"Can we accept this (unity) school model? We all need to think about it. I am not suggesting it, just envisaging it, as a lot of people say they want unity and that it should start from school.

"We want solutions. This, we need to think about as everything starts from school.

"It's not that we want to decide now, but I am just visualising it. What's the solution? It's not that we want to close down Chinese and Tamil schools but to choose the (appropriate) kind of national schools," he said.

At the dialogue involving about 1,300 young civil servants, many expressed their aspirations for unity through education by building single-stream schools with Bahasa Melayu as the lingua franca and empowering the English Language subject without sidelining Tamil and Mandarin.

Also raised was the matter of work-home life balance by setting the maximum number of hours that would not tie down civil servants to long working hours, to the point they had to sacrifice time with family.

On the issue of healthcare affordability, Najib said the fee of RM1 for treatment at a government health facility was not sustainable as the government spent between RM21-RM22 billion per year on the health industry, but only collected between RM400-RM500 million although Malaysia's healthcare service was the best in the world.

He cited the case of a patient Razali Tompong who paid only RM31.80 for his father's cancer treatment at Hospital Kuala Lumpur when the total bill was RM11,000.

"Where in the world can one be charged so low (for cancer treatment)?" Najib said.

Speaking about public transportation, one civil servant said he wanted to see the country free from the problem of traffic congestion by 2050.

Najib said the government was indeed paying a lot of attention to public transportation by implementing projects like the MRT.

"The first phase of the MRT (Mass Rapid Transit) system with a distance of 51km will be completed this July and in a few years, three more phases will be ready.

"Creating a world-class public transportation system is the government's commitment," he said.

The prime minister said all the views and suggestions given today were very useful as input for a new vision for Malaysia.

Copyright (C) 2009-2016 MToday News Sdn. Bhd. All Rights Reserved.

Source: <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/05/31/tn50-people-want-unity-schools-work-home-balance/>