

Malaysia's Beauty Is Incomparable – Najib

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PUTRAJAYA, March 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Malaysia's beauty is not only in terms of physical, but also the special lifestyle of its people, racial relations, freedom, safety and social mobility.

Sharing his experience as a guest when accepting visits to various countries in various continents in the world, in his capacity as a minister and then prime minister, as well as having studied in London since the age of 13, he said there was no other country like Malaysia.

In terms of social mobility, he said the government provided opportunities for its people to study through indirect subsidy since pre-school level until higher studies, hence enabling the people from less affordable background to change their lives for the better.

"The fee for public universities has never been raised with more than 90 per cent of the cost borne by the government. The price of roti canai and teh tarik also increased, but never for study fees.

"For every secondary school student, the cost borne by the government is RM8,900 and for primary school, it is RM8,000. This is among the beauty of Malaysia," he said at a programme with university students organised by the Welfare Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers (BAKTI) at Seri Perdana here today.

Explaining further, Najib said social mobility as a result of government education policies could also be seen in the cabinet lineup with some of the ministers, as well as senior government officers, from less affordable families.

He cited several names, such as International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, Chief Secretary to the Government (KSN) Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa, Secretary-General of Treasury (KSP) Tan Sri Mohd Irwan Serigar Abdullah and Permodalan Nasional Berhad Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar, who became successful individuals because of their seriousness in using the opportunities that were given to them.

"The KSN used to tell me that if he had ikan kembung (with rice) today, then the next day, it would be just the gravy from the fish (with rice).

"As for KSP, his mother had to be a house maid to pay for her children's education," said Najib.

The prime minister said Malaysia's beauty could also be seen in the lifestyle of Malaysians, such as culture and local food, which were incomparable in the world.

"I like to eat ikan patin masak tempoyak and my latest favourite is nasi vanggey in Ipoh. If I go to London, one or two days fed with 'orang puteh' food is alright, but after that I'll also look for rice," he said.

In terms of security, Najib said he felt safer in Malaysia than in countries he had ever been to.

"When in New York, the driver advised me not to go to certain places, likewise in Johannesburg. But in Malaysia, Alhamdulillah, generally, we feel safe," he said.

Najib said Malaysia's beauty could also be seen in terms of the various ethics that could not be found in other countries, with everyone free to practise their culture and religious beliefs in a harmonious situation with no pressure at all, as being experienced by the Rohingyas.

"It is also public holidays for all religious celebrations that Malaysia is known as a country with the most public holidays in the world," he said and jokingly added that the government

also declared 'cuti peristiwa' (occasional holiday) when Malaysia won in a football or badminton tournament.

Najib said all the beautiful things about Malaysia were proof that it was a successful country.

Therefore, he said, the young generation should look beyond the country and have a global mindset, but to hold on strong to their religious and cultural roots.

"If we look at history, the Melaka Malay sultanate used to be well-known because they looked far out, the mindset must be global, but the roots must remain local," he added.

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