



Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** welcoming the **Perdana fellows** (from left) **Evan Lum** (St Edmund Hall, Oxford), **Meor Muhd Arief Muzaffar** (University College London), **Hafiz Ariffin** (Universiti Tun Hussein Onn) and **Low Jin Wu** (Manchester University). Pic by Effendy Rashid

'Help to engage the young'

PERDANA FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME: Students can help explain govt policies, says Najib

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STUDENTS chosen for the inaugural Perdana Fellows' Programme can help the government to reach out to youth, especially to explain government policies, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said yesterday.

"It is my hope that the students will be exposed to how policies are formulated and the challenges we face as a government.

"In my communications with the younger generation, some had related that they were unaware of the policies implemented by the government.

"This is where the fellows can

help by becoming unofficial spokespersons for the government and assist us in engaging and connecting with the younger generation," Najib said at a ceremony before the students were assigned to the various ministers, who will be their mentors for the next three to six months.

Najib said he was confident that the programme would create a strategic engagement with youth.

"I hope they view this experience as a rare opportunity. It reflects the faith and trust this government has in the younger generation."

Najib related that when he was younger, he, too, felt that anyone powerful could change the world.

"It was not until I worked with the government and dabbled in

politics that I understood changing something is not always easy. This doesn't mean change can't happen, it can but it needs political will."

Najib said he looked forward to a successful programme and wished the students well.

The programme, similar to the White House fellowship programme, is Najib's brainchild, and aims to nurture future leaders.

For this year's intake, 70 fresh graduates and undergraduates have been chosen from local and overseas institutions of higher learning, and will be assigned as aides to ministers, including the prime minister.

Applicants were required to submit a 500-word essay to demonstrate their knowledge of public

policies and ability to formulate dynamic ideas to solve problems at the national level.

Those who have completed the programme will be issued certificates while those who perform well will be given the option of continuing to serve with the ministers or take up suitable positions in the civil service.

More than 600 applications were received between June 9 and 20.

Page 1 pic: Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** and his deputy, **Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin** (front row), with participants of the **Perdana Fellows** programme in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Pic by Effendy Rashid