Najib pleased with multi-faceted US visit

DATUK Seri Najib Tun Razak was a busy man over the past week during a working visit to New York and Washington.

One day, he sat with biotech experts and scientists, the next with US fund managers and CEOs of major corporations and twice he addressed world leaders at the United Nations — first on climate change and then warned them of terror threats from Islamic State.

On Wednesday afternoon, the Prime Minister got a pleasant surprise when officials informed him that US President Barack Obama praised Malaysia in his speech at the UN General Assembly.

Although it was a brief mention, Najib said it was a recognition for Malaysia's effort to transform Malaysia.

Obama, in his address, praised Malaysia for its vibrant entrepreneurship and moving into the ranks of advanced economies.

Najib also attended two sessions, one to meet Malaysian students and the other, those working in the US. It is always the same advice to his Malaysian audience — be competitive and always take pride to be a Malaysian.

Datuk Zang Toi who attended a Malaysian diaspora dinner received special mention from the prime minister.

"Zang Toi is a success story of a boy born on the second floor of a grocery shop in Kuala Krai and succeeded as a fashion designer. Whether in New York or all over the world, we are Malaysians. Take pride to be a Malaysian and what is important is to be with us as one Malaysia," he said.

Despite his busy schedule, Najib always made time for the accompanying media to explain his mission.

At one scheduled press conference, the media was unhappy with the location selected in Queens as it was too noisy for us to hear him. Najib sportingly agreed to change the venue back to Manhattan, about half an hour away, despite it being a last minute change and already late into the night.

He knows the media only wanted to do their job and understands the hazard if he is misquoted in the press.

Just before he sat down with us for what we normally term as "wrap up" session, a smiling Najib looked at us and said: "It is a multi-faceted visit."

Then he started listing the meetings and events he attended including IM4U, bilateral meetings with other leaders from Pakistan, Netherlands and Ukraine and spent half a day in Washington DC to address students at Georgetown University.

I am satisfied with the visit as it is all encompassing and multi-faceted. Hopefully there will be achievements and accomplishments that we can measure and higher profile for Malaysia. It is selling the Malaysian story to the world," he said.

Looking at another aspect, Najib's visit this time was an opportunity to push for his moderation agenda, which he first called for four years ago at the UN.

With the threats from terror group Islamic State, the UN General Assembly was the right platform to push his vision of peace and moderation.

But Najib has not forgotten that he is in New York to lobby for Malaysia's campaign to win a Security Council non-permanent seat.

"I dont want to pre-empt but we are encouraged with the response," he said when asked about Malaysia's chances in the election on Oct 16.

It is just like his response to the Barisan Nasional win in Pengkalan Kubor earlier this week.

He expected a win but unsure of the majority. May be that is the best way to sum up his feelings.