

**PM: Reforms meant for M'sia's survival**  
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said his administration had introduced a series of reforms designed to create more democratic space because it would be important for the country's survival.

"Even though some say it is risky, we do it for survival, after 50 years of Independence and more than five decades since the formation of Malaysia.

"More so, we are on the edge of accelerating towards the destination of becoming a developed nation," he said in a special televised speech tonight on the eve of Malaysia Day.

Najib announced the abolishment of the much dreaded Internal Security Act 1960 (ISA) which critics say is open to abuse, particularly on dissidents, for arbitrary and indefinite detention.

He also announced that three Emergency declarations would be lifted, thereby effectively ending the use of Emergency laws which also allow detention without trial.

Laws curtailing press freedom as well as freedom of assembly will be reviewed, said Najib.

Najib said that these reforms were part of the reform strategies which have been designed since his administration took over two years ago and that now was the opportune moment to implement them.

"The Malaysia that we have dreamt of together and are creating together is a Malaysia which practices functional and inclusive democracy where peace and order will be preserved in line with the spirit of the constitution, supremacy of laws and respect for human and individual rights," said Najib in his concluding remarks.

**'Not power-hungry'**

Earlier in his speech, in explaining why the Emergency declarations were lifted, Najib said that the government had realised that Malaysia has changed.

"(We) feel the pulse (of the people), the apprehension and the people's aspirations in wanting Malaysia to have a more dynamic democracy, where opinions, ideas and mass concern will be given attention.

"This allows us to be on the same league as other democratic systems in the world which are based on the universal philosophy - for the people, by the people," he said.

In the opening portions of his speech, Najib recounted the past 54 year rule of the BN government and stressed that it has never swayed from Parliamentary democracy, regardless of the challenges faced.

Najib said that then-deputy prime minister Abdul Razak Hussein (right) had in 1969 taken over executive power of the country through the National Operations Council after the May 13 riots and never held on to it longer than necessary.

He said that Razak was aware that extraordinary powers which they held cannot become the norm.

"Instead, they realise that absolute power was held in trust to resolve and control the tragedy which was happening then," he said.