

Najib: M'sia flourished due to strong leadership
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Malaysia's ability to not only survive the early challenges as an independent country but flourish and prosper was not a product of chance or luck, said Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

He said Malaysia pulled through because of its leadership and there were particular leadership traits that one could easily identify.

"Our past leaders had a deep care and concern for the nation, and their service went well beyond the call of duty. Their decisions were instinctive and came from genuine patriotism and a strong sense of purpose.

"They were willing to make big personal sacrifices," he said when delivering his speech on 'Leadership in Challenging Times' at the 25th Tunku Abdul Rahman Lecture organised by the Malaysian Institute of Management in Kuala Lumpur last night.

Also present was Malaysian Institute of Management president Mohammed Hanif Omar.

Najib said past leaders were also bold enough to take action regardless of whether it was popular or not.

He said they focused on what was urgent and necessary.

This, he said, was exemplified by his father Abdul Razak Hussein (Malaysia's second prime minister) who was known for his principle of 'firm action and less talk'.

When matters required immediate action, winning people over took second place to responding with speed, he said.

"Tunku Abdul Rahman bore the burden of negotiating for an independent Federation of Malaya, emerging from the shackles of an empire and recovering from a communist insurgency.

"Tunku's prime challenge was to forge a new nation out of a society with little sense of unity or overall identity," said Najib.

The prime minister said his father had led alongside Tunku Abdul Rahman, at a time when Malaysian society was in deep crisis, plagued by ethnic divisions and festering tensions.

He said Razak was not only able to prevent the almost-certain disintegration of society, but he put Malaysia on its path towards the rapid and widespread socio-economic development that was to follow.

He said both Razak and his deputy, Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman, died in office and worked to the end, although they both knew the extent of their illnesses.

They were willing to assume responsibility for the wellbeing of all Malaysians, he said.

"They fought for what was right, took difficult decisions and created radical policies - all from the most noble and moral motives," he said.

He described those leaders as dynamic and not rigid, saying, "I refer again to Razak's introduction of the New Economic Policy in 1970, and its continued implementation by his successor, Hussein Onn".

"Here, wisdom and pragmatism were evident. We had leaders who saw beyond the short-term, and created a framework that would build a more equitable and sustainable future, even though they knew it was not one they were likely to live long enough to see themselves," he said.

- Bernama

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