

PM: M'sia success story clouded by overly politicised issues
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said that the reality of Malaysia's continuing economic success is often clouded by issues that are overly politicised.

He lamented that this was due to some people trying to paint a different picture of Malaysia for their own selfish ends when the nation's economic underlying fundamentals had consistently been strong.

"Politics is always lively in our country, but if issues are overly politicised – as they have been - the reality of Malaysia's continuing success story can be harder to see," he said at the Malaysia-United Kingdom Investor Showcase at Marlborough House, Pall Mall, in London today.

The one-day showcase, aimed at attracting investors, including fund managers to invest in Malaysia, was attended by 188 British companies and 34 Malaysian companies.

Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC) chairperson Lord Marland, Commonwealth secretary-general Patricia Scotland, Minister of State for Trade and Investment UK Lord Price, senior government representatives and officials attended the showcase organised by the Malaysian Investment Development Authority and the CWEIC.

Najib emphasised that Malaysia continued to be resilient as proven by the fact that it managed to emerge stronger after each global crisis.

In setting the record straight, Najib, who is also finance minister, gave the assurance that Malaysia was on track to transform into a more inclusive and sustainable economy that would be better placed to weather external shocks.

The Malaysian economy grew 4.2 percent in the first quarter of this year which was beyond market expectation of 4.0 percent.

"Growth last year was five percent and is primarily driven by the private sector, which contributed 69.2 percent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

"This shows the confidence that private investors have in our country and our future.

"Between 2009 and 2015, our foreign direct investment grew at more than 22 percent per annum while Gross National Income increased nearly 50 percent, 1.8 million jobs were created and inflation kept low," he said.

Najib said Malaysia's financial market also performed well as the overall size of the capital market increased to RM2.8 trillion in 2015, about 2.5 times Malaysia's GDP, while the equity market expanded 69.6 percent to RM1.7 trillion and, the bond and sukuk market grew 74.4 percent to RM1.1 trillion.

The country's outlook also remained favourable with the World Bank expecting Malaysia's GDP to record 4.5 percent growth this year and 2017, a higher rate than their earlier forecast of 4.2 percent based on an improvement in overall export performance.

He said the International Monetary Fund team visited Malaysia in January and commended the country for its significant progress in improving the foundation for substantial economic growth and maintaining macroeconomic and financial stability.

Meanwhile, Malaysia was ranked 18th out of 140 economies in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2015-2016 and ninth in the world for Financial Market Development.

"These rankings are an endorsement of the progress the government has made in enhancing efficiency and competitiveness in our country through the Government Transformation Programme and the Economic Transformation Programme," he added.

- *Bernama*