

Bouquets for Najib As He Celebrates Second Anniversary At the Helm
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PUTRAJAYA -- Today marks the second anniversary of the dynamic stewardship of the nation's administration under Najib Tun Razak. Much has happened since he took over on April 3, 2009 when the country somewhat floated in sea of political doubt following the election tsunami of March 8, 2008.

Over the last two years, Najib has done much to restore confidence in the country, especially among the voters.

And this was recently acknowledged by Daim Zainuddin, the country's former economic adviser and finance minister, who paid tribute to the prime minister's efforts in rebuilding confidence towards Barisan Nasional and the federal government.

Perhaps the most striking of many of Najib's confidence-building initiatives has been the very inclusive 1Malaysia concept, which gives renewed hope on many fronts to those who might have been alienated by discriminative policies of the past.

And hope, coupled with affirmative action, can be such a powerful medicine for people enfeebled by irrational and unjust deeds.

For Najib, he has always perceived the diversity of Malaysians from many ethnic groups -- Malays, Chinese, Indians, Dayaks, Ibans, Kelabits, Orang Ulu, Bidayuhs, Kadazans or Muruts -- as a source of strength for the country.

"What makes Malaysia unique is the diversity of our people. 1Malaysia's goal is to preserve and enhance this unity in diversity which has always been our strength and remains our best hope for the future," he has always stressed.

These words -- "Each of us, despite our differences, shares a desire for a better tomorrow. Each of us wants opportunity, respect, friendship and understanding" -- have been often said by him to remind Malaysians of the need to stick together and build a better Malaysia.

These words are stark reminders to Malaysians of the need to reach out to others, not just paying lip service or only interacting with people of their own stock or community.

And the best exemplifier of this 1Malaysia concept has been Najib himself in his many walkabouts to various communities.

As prime minister, he is no stranger to busy markets, remote long houses, far-flung villages, street stalls, hospitals -- you name it -- reaching out to people and telling them that things are just going to get better if everyone pulls his or her weight to contribute to the country.

To get the government machinery cracking to serve the people better, Najib initiated the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) and established the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) under the Prime Minister's Department to monitor several sets of National Key Results Areas (NKRAs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for various ministries.

Despite the initial misgivings by some skeptics, the GTP scorecard after one year has resulted in much success in that the lives of several millions had been directly or indirectly enhanced by the programme.

For the first time in four years, the country's crime index had been reduced by 35 percent and street crimes by 15 percent, the largest year-on-year reduction in the country's history.

Last year also saw the highest achievement in terms of education with 700,000 children having been provided with early education, showing a significant improvement in reading and counting.

The nation's disbursement of scholarships has also increased and made more equitable under Najib's tenure, thus removing a sore point among many high-achievers and their parents.

Najib has often stated that the government views scholarship as an investment, not an expenditure, stressing that the disbursement will eventually steer the country to greater heights.

"If we continue investing in people, we will make our nation more competitive," he said, adding that as Malaysia moved towards a high income developed nation, the key to the success was in its people.

Jordan's ambassador to Malaysia, Maher A. Lukasha was quoted as saying that the Malaysian government's support for education were positive endeavours for its people and that education was likened by his country's King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein as "an armour protecting the nation".

In combating corruption, the government's enactment of the Whistleblower Act last year has been a meaningful step. Action taken by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) had also managed to change the people's perception and it is now becoming more confident in tackling corruption, especially in the last few days with the detention of several Customs officers with ill-gotten gains.

As for urban public transportation in the last one year, Malaysia achieved 2.34 million in light rail transit riderships and an increase of 192 percent in the number of transit bus passengers.

More than two million rural residents also benefited from 750km of new roads, the electricity supply and clean water to 36,723 households and the building and repairing of 16,962 houses in remote areas. There has also been a reduction of 99 percent in hardcore poor households.

T. Jasudasen, Singapore's High Commissioner to Malaysia, described Najib as a problem-solver. The Pahang-born High Commissioner, said the GTP and Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) reflected Najib's earnest efforts to deal with serious issues head-on to bring about results.

"He's a results-oriented leader," Jasudasen added.

Under Najib's leadership, the government has broken new ground on several fronts. But the prime minister also believes that Malaysia can do better and is on the verge of greater

accomplishments.

With him at the helm as the nation's leader, unifier, exemplifier and transformer, Malaysia can really do it and perhaps it is not out of place to suggest that the popular rallying cry of "Malaysia Boleh" should also go hand-in-hand with that of "Najib Boleh".

(Bernama)

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