

Newspaper	New Straits Times
Date	16/4/2014

PRIME NEWS

# 'Economic push crucial'

**TRANSFORMATION:**  
Measures will boost nation's financial position, says PM

**ZULITA MUSTAFA**  
PUTRAJAYA  
zulita@nst.com.my

**T**HE economic transformation programme must continue to spur the growth of the country's economy, said Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

The prime minister said measures such as fiscal consolidation and subsidy rationalisation, including the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), should be carried out systematically and in a prudent manner so that the people would not be burdened.

"Any indication that the process will slow down or be reviewed will give out negative signals about the economy.

"We must carry out these measures to strengthen the country's financial position," he said at the Finance Ministry's monthly gathering here yesterday.

Present was Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan.

Najib, who is also finance minister, said these fundamentals showed the government's determination and commitment, which would be positively evaluated and rated by international ratings agencies and other countries.

"I believe this is also the best way to show our ability to compete with other countries and to achieve



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak meeting Finance Ministry staff at the ministry's monthly gathering in Putrajaya yesterday. Pic by Mohd Fadli Hamzah

moderately high economic growth. If there is no economic growth, our burden will get heavier.

"Whatever we want to carry out, including fiscal consolidation, will be very taxing without encouraging economic growth. This is (the reason behind) our commitment to attain more or less five per cent (economic growth).

"Last year, we recorded a gross domestic product growth of 4.7 per cent, and this year, God willing, we can achieve higher growth."

Najib said the government could not always depend on popular policies.

"The GST, for example, is very good for any economy. We all know the way forward is via the GST, which can determine the country's future and prosperity."

However, he said, there were still groups, which, to get political

mileage, opposed its implementation, although the GST was for the benefit of the people.

Najib said the government admitted that costs could rise in the first year of implementation, but it would be a one-off hike.

"We have measures (in place) to ensure that it will not be a burden to the people. What is important is that the country's financial standing will be strong."

He said the International Monetary Fund had recently stated that even though the world economy was recovering, the rate of recovery was too slow.

Meanwhile, Bernama reported that Najib received a courtesy call from Sri Lankan Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa at his office here yesterday.

Rajapaksa and his delegation arrived at 5.35pm and the meeting

lasted about 30 minutes.

Later, Najib received a courtesy call from the United Kingdom Defence Department delegation, which was led by UK Parliament Under-Secretary of State and Defence Equipment, Support and Technology Minister Philip Dunne.

Rajapaksa and Dunne were in the country to attend the 14th Defence Services Asia 2014 Exhibition at the Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur.

NST Digital Edition



For video, go to [subscription.nstp.com.my](http://subscription.nstp.com.my)