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'Working together benefits Asia'

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COMMON GOAL:

Continued peace, growth no longer a dream, says Najib

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Jl SIANcountriesstandto gain
/\ immensely if their govern-
X A. ments work together, whiie
respecting the principles of tol-
erance, dialogue and moderation,
said Darnk Seri Najib Razak.

The prime minister, speaking at
the Boao Forum for Asia 2015 open-
ing ceremony here yesterday, said
Asia could maintain growth and
build on common prosperity
through the principles of sustain-
ability and inclusivity, and by fo-
cusing on the people.

He said Asia's common destiny
of continued peace and growth was
no longer a dream, but was well
within grasp, with the right in-
gredients and a strong will.

Quoting a Chinese proverb, "Do
not fear going forward slowly; fear
only to stand still", Najib
said "standing still" was not one of
the characteristics of the conti-
nent.

"Everyone has heard of 'Asian
dragons' or 'tigers', and our era has
been talked about as being the
Asian Century for more than 25
years.

"Now, however, is the time to
ensure that this promise becomes a
reality."

He said Asia had proven its
strength and resilience, weather-
ing the world Rnancial crisis far
better than many other economies,
because of the partnership among

its countries.

"Intra-Asian trade is Aourishing.
In fact, globally, it is the fastest
growing trade route, and in 2013, it
represented 25 per cent of the con-
tinent's annual exports.

"Yes, we are diverse in culture,
race and religion.

"But, look at what we can do
together."

He said in October last year,
Malaysia was one of 21 countries to
sign up as founding members of
the Asian Infrastructure Invest-
ment Bank.

"The bank predicts that the num-
ber may grow to 35 in due course.

"Within the last few weeks, (it
was) first Britain, then Germany,
France and Italy... All agreed to join
us as founding members.

"Europe's largest economies
have every confidence that
the bank will play a huge role in
shaping the future.

"And, they don't want to miss out
on that opportunity."

Najib said for Malaysia, the
theme of this year's forum - Asia's
New Future; Towards a Commu-
nity of Common Destiny - could
notbemoreappropriate.

"We are chairing Asean this year,
and reaching for Asia's common
destiny complements the vision to
establish an Asean Community by
the end of this year," he said,
adding that Malaysia had adopted
"Our People, Our Community, Our
Vision" as the theme for its chair-
manship.

"All development must be in-
clusive and no single community
should be marginalised or left be-
hind.

"We will ensure that fair em-
phasis is given to sustainable and
equitable economic development,"
Najib said, adding that Malaysia
recognised that in an interconnect-
ed world, trade and wealth creation



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak speaking at the Boao Forum for Asia 2015 in Hainan yesterday.
Bernama pic

were not zero-sum games.

"Communities and nations need
not fear each other's successes.

"Cultivating spheres of cooper-
ation rather than competing
spheres of induence will lead to
progress for all.

"If we can do that - and there is
no reason to think we cannot -
then, Asia's new future will be
brighter than ever.

"It is tune to fuLy embrace our
common destiny of peace, devel-
opment and prosperity for all."

Najib, who arrived here on
Friday, also had meetings with
Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte
and Kazakhstan Prime Minister
Karim Massimov on the sidelines
of the forum before leaving for
Kuala Lumpur yesterday after-
noon.

On Friday night, hours after his
arrival in Boao, the prime minister
had a bilateral meeting with Chi-
nese President Xi Jinping, followed
by a dinner.

During the meeting, which was
at Xi's personal invitation, both
leaders discussed bilateral ties in
the areas of trade, education, fi-
nancial services, infrastructure de-
velopment and defence.