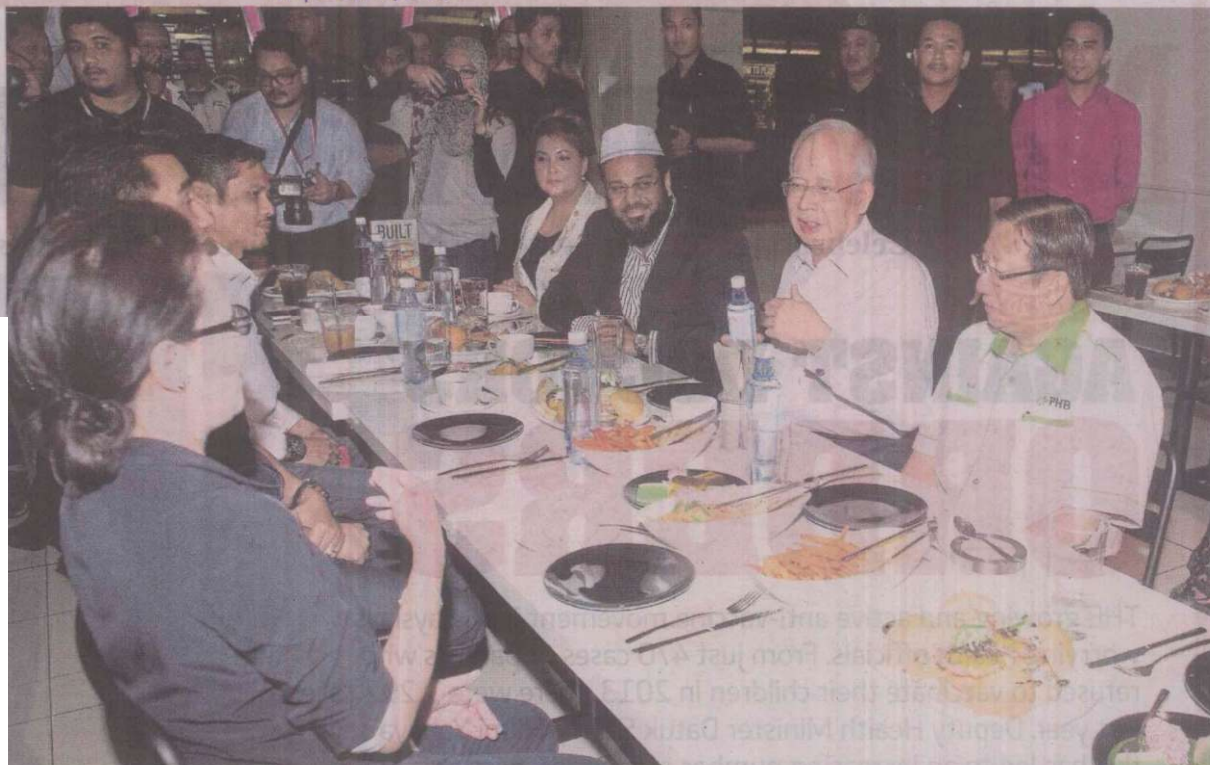


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PM: Govt is consistent, responsible

FORESIGHT: Some decisions like GST, 'though unpopular, have proven to benefit country'

SHUIB TAIB
AND KOI KYE LEE
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak speaking to NU Sentral shopowners after the opening ceremony of NU Sentral shopping centre and Menara 1 Sentrum in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. With him is Pelaburan Hartanah Bhd managing director and chief executive officer Datuk Kamalul Arifin Othman (right). Bernama pic

THE government is consistent with its decisions and some decisions considered unpopular were made to ensure the people were taken care of.

Speaking at the opening of NU Sentral shopping centre and Menara 1 Sentrum here, both owned by Pelaburan Hartanah Bhd (PHB), Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the government was working to ensure the nation became a developed country.

Citing the April introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) as an example of a widely criticised move, Najib said it was the toughest decision the government had to make.

"However, despite the criticism, the consumption tax is a saviour of our country, as we are now facing uncertainties and challenges because of the drop in world oil prices," he said in his speech yesterday, adding that the 50 per cent drop in oil prices had caused RM30 billion in lost revenue.

"Maybe most people are not aware, and had said the government's decision was troubling the people, but the (introduction of) GST was a fair and right move."

The prime minister said GST had bolstered the economy, as the government had collected RM21 billion in revenue after the introduction of the consumption tax.

Najib said the opposition, who had initially criticised the move, had also adopted the GST in its alternative budget.

The opposition, the prime minister said, was never consistent in its stand.

"The opposition is seasonal. When it is convenient for them, they will say 'yes', but when it is not (convenient), they will say 'no'.

"Therefore, the people must realise that as a government, we

(Barisan Nasional) are responsible and do what is good for the people."

He said decisions that had been made might not be the most popular or welcomed at the time, but if they brought positive outcomes to the nation, then they had to be implemented.

Najib said the government was always looking for measures to reduce the burden faced by the people, as evident in the initiatives

that were introduced during the tabling of the 2016 Budget in Parliament last Friday.

Among the measures that were announced were the increased income-tax relief for households with children aged 18 and below from RM1,000 to RM2,000, and tax relief of RM1,500 for individuals supporting their elderly parents.

Earlier, Najib toured NU Sentral and Menara 1 Sentrum, before

opening the two new buildings.

He was accompanied by PHB managing director and chief executive officer Datuk Kamalul Arifin Othman.

Congratulating PHB on the two new buildings located in a strategic area here, Najib said the government strove to develop Malaysia as an inclusive and fair country that involved people of all races, regardless whether they lived in urban or rural areas.