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# Najib: Asia should promote common development

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ASIA should promote common development and resist “interference from outside powers,” said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak in Bangkok yesterday.

The era of old empires, he said, had long gone and Asians insisted its cultures, laws and sovereignty be respected by all.

“If this is to be the Asian century, and I believe it is, we must stand tall and seize control of our own destiny. Our peoples and our countries are stepping up to the challenge of leadership as the centre of

global gravity shifts to the east — to Asia,” he said.

The prime minister made the statement during the plenary session of the Second Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Summit, which was held at the Thai Foreign Ministry.

Thai Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha had earlier opened the summit, themed “One Asia, Diverse Strength”.

Najib also said it is imperative that the 34-member states of ACD are more united, so that it could be the driving force for global economic growth.

This is in view of the present difficult economic conditions faced by the region.

He said the International Monetary Fund in its 2016 World Economic Outlook projected global growth to expand by 3.1% this year and 3.4% in 2017, underscoring the need for enhancing policy coordination among countries.

The ACD countries, he believed, were not capitalising on what it could do as an organisation and urged them to focus on specific programmes that would yield quick and tangible outcomes.

Najib further said Malaysia has the relevant experience with National Transformation Programme, which has nearly doubled the gross national income, created 1.8 million jobs and nearly eradicated poverty.

The prime minister also said the country has supported the ACD pillar on education and human resource development, reaffirming Malaysia’s commitment to developing the Asia eUniversity (AeU).

Since establishing operation in 2008, the AeU, which is

the brainchild of Malaysia, has enrolled around 2,350 international students from 60 countries and established partnerships in 25 countries, he said.

In concluding his remarks, he called on the ACD to ensure its future is marked by cooperation, interdependence, sharing, caring and complementarity.

“We can attain this, if we show the necessary political will and work collectively for the good of all. I’m sure that all present have the determination to do so,” added Najib.