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'People are suffering less'

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PM: Proactive measures have helped to stem slow economy

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PEKAN: Had the Government not taken any proactive measures to deal with the economic slowdown, the people would have been forced to face more life pressures today, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said unlike the Opposition that only talked but took no action, the Government preferred to talk less and do more to develop the country and help the people.

"When I took over the leadership in 2009, up to 41% of our income depended on oil and gas. Today, it has been reduced to 14%.

"The price of oil has dropped from US\$110 (RM450) to about US\$30 (RM122.50) only. Think about it; if we had not taken steps, our income would have been affected.

"It would have been impossible for us to give out the one-off aid to rubber smallholders and dispense BR1M. We may even have to reduce allowances for civil servants," Najib said at the presentation ceremony of the Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (Risda) div-



Wefie time: Najib taking a selfie with orang asli youths who attended the Risda function in Pekan.

idends and the launch of a charitable assistance for smallholders here yesterday.

At the event, Najib announced RM94.5mil in dividends for New Cluster Planting and Commercial Replanting schemes' participants and another RM5.2mil in charitable assistance for 368,000 smallholders nationwide.

He said planters should not blame the Government for the drop in rubber prices as it was out of its control.

"The price fluctuates over the years. Once it was so high that teachers would tap rubber first before going to school.

"All commodity prices have

dropped due to the economic slowdown but our situation is not threatening yet because we always make the effort to do, plan and think proactively," said Najib.

He advised planters to diversify their sources of income as well.

"Don't depend on rubber only. We need income from various sources.

"Find extra income because this is the way forward to become an advanced nation. We, as citizens, must think of ways to improve ourselves through diversified sources of income," he said.

Najib also said he would continue his late father's agenda to help

rural folk.

"The agenda cannot be achieved in one generation so it is compulsory for us to continue the work. Maybe the focus has shifted because the basic needs for the rural communities have nearly been covered.

"Now, we must focus on increasing income. This is now the core of our struggle," he added.

At a breaking fast event at Masjid Nenasi later, Najib said Ramadan was a time for Muslims to achieve success rather than feel weak.

He said Muslims should take inspiration from the successes of Muslims in battles led by Prophet Muhammad during the holy month.