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# PM: Uphold sovereignty for peace

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**STABILITY:** Govt to build RM350m bridge connecting Bagan Datoh and Pasir Salak

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**D**ATUK Seri Najib Razak yesterday called on Malaysians to uphold the nation's sovereignty and to reject militant extremism to preserve the country's peace.

Speaking at the launch of the

national-level Hari Raya open house here yesterday, the prime minister reminded the people that unity and political stability were prerequisites for continued development and prosperity.

"We cannot afford to take the peace (we enjoy) for granted. Just recently, 14 people were arrested for their (suspected) involvement with the Islamic State (terror group). The people must do all they can to defend the country's peace," he told some 20,000 guests at the event.

Najib said, besides defending the country against subversive elements, Malaysians should preserve racial and religious harmony.

"Political stability is also very important. The recent Sungai Besar and Kuala Kangsar parliamentary by-elections have shown that

Barisan Nasional still has the people's support despite global economic uncertainties."

He said that despite the drop in crude oil prices, the country's economy continued to perform well, thanks to its palm oil and service industries.

Najib, meanwhile, said more national-level celebrations would be held in suburban and rural areas to boost the relationship between the people and top leaders.

He announced that a bridge, which would connect Bagan Datoh and Pasir Salak, would be constructed at a cost of RM350 million.

"RM90 million has also been allocated to upgrade the road in Hutan Melintang here. These are just some of the big projects that will be implemented soon."

Najib said plans to build a Maktab Rendah Sains Mara branch and a polytechnic university, which would be built at costs of RM150 million and RM220 million, respectively, were proceeding as scheduled.

He reaffirmed the cabinet's approval of the state government's plan to upgrade Bagan Datoh into a full district.

On another matter, Najib defended the government's 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) initiative, saying it helped stimulate the economy.

"In Bagan Datoh, RM14.8 million was distributed to the people under BR1M. If Bagan Datoh did not receive (cash) incentives, how will the local economy thrive?"

"Now, the people have more money to spend on necessities,

clothes and shoes for their children. When there is demand, the economy will move forward and our country will become more prosperous."

Najib denied claims that BR1M was a means to buy votes.

"There are some who equate BR1M to *dedak*. You cannot equate cash assistance to animal feed.

"Other countries have also given financial aid to their people. It's not true that BR1M is a means to buy votes. There are people who receive BR1M but do not vote for (BN)."

Present at the event were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein, Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Zambray Abd Kadir and cabinet members.