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PM: We won't shirk our responsibility

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RESILIENCE: Tough decisions, like having GST, made for good of people, says Najib

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THE government has never shirked its responsibility in safeguarding the people and nation, even when faced with a challenging global economic situation.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said decisions — even unpopular ones like the Goods and Services Tax (GST) — were made for the sake of all.

He said economic experts told him that without GST, Malaysia's economy would have been bleak and could have suffered crippling results, including a serious financial crisis.

"More and more people have accepted GST and it has, in a way, saved the nation. Some, however, have used the government's unpopular decisions, including the implementation of the GST, as a weapon to attack us for their own political mileage," said Najib, who is also finance minister, before presenting excellent service awards to 81 Finance Ministry staff yesterday.

Present were Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Mohamad Hanadzlah and Treasury Secretary-General Tan Sri Dr Mohd

Irwan Serigar Abdullah.

Najib said the projected RM39 billion revenue from GST this year would go back to the people.

He said revenue from GST had allowed the government to proceed with mega projects that would have huge multiplier effects, such as the Mass Rapid Transit and Pan-Borneo Highway projects.

"This shows that we are a government that does not run from its responsibilities. But still, our good intentions have been misconstrued by some for their own political gains."

Najib said everyone should take into account the external factors, especially those that were beyond the control of the country's leaders, such as the crash of global oil prices and the shrinking of China's economy, when appraising the government's performance in driving Malaysia's economy.

External factors should not put a brake on ensuring the nation's economy remained resilient by making the right decisions despite pressures from outside the country, he said.

Najib said the economy had expanded five per cent last year, which was slightly higher than economists' forecast of 4.9 per cent.

"Malaysia's economy has registered a growth of 4.2 per cent in the first quarter of this year and this is a very promising (development)."

Najib lauded the recipients of the awards as they had set the benchmark for other staff. He thanked the ministry's staff for their contributions and hard work, especially in facing the sluggish global economy.