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PRIMA PROGRAMME

**'IT'S CLOSE
TO MY HEART'**

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Many can afford to own a home because of the projects, says Najib

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has given an assurance that the government under his leadership will continue to support the 1Malaysia People's Housing Programme (PRIMA).

He said the idea of establishing PRIMA was not merely to build houses, but to ensure that such homes were of high quality and built at lower market prices at strategic locations.

Citing an example, Najib said houses at the PRIMA project in Kuala Ketil, Kedah, cost RM235,000 per unit, while houses in the vicinity went for RM295,000.

"This is the best example of PRIMA's success. Many can afford to own a home because of PRIMA projects.

"As the prime minister, the government under my leadership

will ensure the continuity of PRIMA with the Bumiputera agenda becoming part of the PRIMA programme," he said at a gathering of PRIMA's Bumiputera partners with the prime minister.

Present was Perbadanan PRIMA Malaysia chief executive officer Datuk Abdul Mutalib Alias.

Najib said he had been told that PRIMA needed additional liquidity and gave an assurance that the government would explore the possibilities.

"Don't worry. This is an ongoing initiative to build 500,000 units that cannot be done in the blink of an eye.

"It will take a few years and it can be achieved," he said.

He shared how PRIMA was first mooted with several people, including its late chairman Tan Sri Jamaluddin Jarjis, through discussions in a coffee house in Washington, the United States.

"I keep a picture of us during the discussion next to my chair here in Putrajaya.

"It shows how close the PRIMA programme is to my heart."

Najib stressed the quality of PRIMA homes as he wanted house buyers to have a good quality of life staying in such homes



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak at a gathering with PRIMA's Bumiputera partners in Putrajaya yesterday. PIC BY MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

with an affordable price-tag, where their children could grow up.

"Quality homes will lead to a quality community. With quality homes, too, they can push up the land value."

For the Bumiputera business players, Najib said Perbadanan PRIMA Malaysia had awarded more than RM15 billion worth of contracts to 574 Bumiputera firms for various types of construction, consultation jobs and other support services.

"This is a big sum and we will continue with such a commitment," he said to loud applause from the floor.

Najib said the government had several priorities, including the Bumiputera agenda, public transport, cost of living, education and job assurance, which it wanted to address to improve the quality of living for the people.

Mutalib said the PRIMA programme had unlocked the true value of Malay reserve land and this was one of the programme's main contributions to the Bumiputera agenda.

He said PRIMA had 61 projects to develop a total of 53,062 units of homes on Malay reserve land nationwide.

"Before this, the value of such land was estimated to be about RM1.2 billion.

"Now, with the presence of our projects, the real estate value of these areas (both land and development value) has gone up by more than 10 times to RM12 billion.

"There is more Malay reserve land at strategic locations across the country.

"We hope PRIMA would be given the opportunity to develop these lands not only to help unlock its value, but also to generate and stimulate economic activities in these areas, and consequently, contribute towards empowering the Bumiputera Agenda," he said after the gathering.

On ensuring the quality of homes to be built under the programme, Mutalib said those who were awarded PRIMA contracts

must comply with certain standards and a set of comprehensive guidelines.

He said for the construction-related jobs alone, PRIMA had awarded more than RM22.4 billion worth of contracts to business partners, comprising developers, contractors and vendors.

The Bumiputera portion for these construction-related jobs accounts for 62 per cent of the contract value awarded.

As a government-led initiative, he said PRIMA was designed with an in-built Bumiputera Agenda element to ensure an equitable participation in this national programme.

It targets to achieve a minimum of 30 per cent Bumiputera equity share in the entire programme.

A total of 9,791 PRIMA units have been sold to date, with an estimated sale value of RM2.36 billion.

More than 1.47 million Malaysians have registered for PRIMA homes nationwide, of which 166,972 have applied to buy PRIMA homes so far.