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NATIONAL DAY MESSAGE

NAJIB: WE ARE ON WAY TO TOP 20

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Nation developing fast, thanks to systematic administration, says PM

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MALAYSIA'S development has significantly accelerated since 2009. It is centred on the 1Malaysia philosophy, which focuses on inclusivity and the people's wellbeing.

In his 2017 Merdeka Day message yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said after six decades of independence, Malaysia, which is among the younger countries, is well on its way to be among the world's top 20, as seen in the accolades and recognition it received.

Despite the world's fluctuating economy, Najib said Malaysia remained resilient following a systematic administration, efficient execution, and strategic and prudent planning.

"Let us thank Allah, for in conjunction with our 60th Merdeka anniversary, we have recorded encouraging performances and continuous achievements.

"All the numbers and facts are not empty talk or rhetoric, but validated by credible evaluation bodies. All of these I have tabled in the National Transformation Programme Annual Report for the sixth time in May."

Najib said the country's independence would not have become a reality without peace and stability.

"We shall not even once forget the sacrifices made by our soldiers and security forces, includ-

ing those who are standing guard to protect the country's sovereignty and peace."

In respect of nationhood, Najib said, it would not be too far-fetched to define Malaysia as a unique and dynamic nation.

"It means, after tens of years, we have managed to characterise this nation with policies, philosophies, formulas and values that are complete and holistic.

"And, if we are to look into the achievements made, they are based on the Federal Constitution and national ideology that are solid, inclusive and just."

On Malaysia's recognition as a progressive Islamic country, Najib said the nation had long held to the principles of moderation, as guided by previous leaderships and academics, other than the methodology outlined under *maqasid syariah*.

"We are the source of reference for many developing countries due to our clear stand against radicalism and extremism, especially in the fight against the elements of Daesh, or the Islamic State terror group.

"Hence, that is why the (Saudi Arabia ruler) King Salman Abdulaziz Al-Saud has chosen Malaysia to house the International Peace Centre. At the same time, we reject deviant pluralism. We are standing on a platform which is not extreme, but not too liberal as well.

"The root of the matter is, in the era of this government's administration, there is no other gift more special to substantiate



A fireworks display in conjunction with the National Day celebrations in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Bernama pic

the true meaning of 'Merdeka' for the people, other than being a government which is able to deliver and execute the promises made from time to time."

Najib said the government would continue to implement people-centric projects such as the world-class transportation system Mass Rapid Transit, which serves half a million passengers daily, the East Coast Rail Link, Pan-Borneo Highway and the High-Speed Rail.

Initiatives under the 1Malaysia brand including Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia (BRIM), Kedai Rakyat 1Malaysia (KRIM), Perumahan Rakyat 1Malaysia (PRIMA),

1Malaysia Clinic, 1Malaysia Students Discount Card and other assistance to farmers, smallholders, fishermen and Fel'da settlers, would be continued to improve the wellbeing of Malaysia's most populous segment.

"What is most important is that we must set our goals beyond the common target. With all the achievements, we must always raise the bar high and continue to keep the bar high for Malaysia."

In a rallying call for all Malaysians to stand united, Najib said this year's Merdeka theme, "Negaraku: Sehati Sejiwa", should be extended and em-

braced by all, right from the peoples of peninsula to Sabah and Sarawak.

At the same time, Najib called on Malaysians to join hands to make the Malaysian Digital Policy a success, preparing the country in its journey towards "The Fourth Industrial Revolution".

"This is not the time for us to become divided. Whatever the challenges may be, we should not give up, but press forward in line with our aspiration and Transformasi Nasional 2050 philosophy, in order to be a country of par excellence, which is led by a generation of the same traits in excellence."