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Najib shares steps to reduce poverty

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PM: Our philosophy is to ensure every citizen benefits from economic development

KUALA LUMPUR: Constant focus on growth while ensuring every citizen benefits from the country's economic development are Malaysia's philosophy in its efforts to reduce poverty rate in the country, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

During an exclusive interview with Al Arabiya news channel, he said the Government also stressed on the fact that the growth is associated with justice.

"We made sure to balance so that everyone can benefit from it without marginalising any citizen.

"This is the philosophy that we believe in and we embody with effective measures and programmes, and you can see the significant

reduction of poverty in Malaysia and increase in income to unprecedented levels," he said in the interview which was made in conjunction with the historic visit to Malaysia by Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

Najib noted that the percentage of poverty rate dropped to "a very low 0.6%" in 2015 as compared to more than 60% when Malaysia gained independence in 1957.

On Malaysia's success in tackling unemployment, Najib said Government policies, which enabled the private sector to become the engine of growth and coupled with direct foreign investments, had led to the creation of new job opportunities.

"The public sector was dominant

in the past, but through the process of transformation that we've made and the policies that we carried out as part of the transition plan since 2009, the private sector became the engine of growth today," he added.

The Prime Minister said he also stressed on the need for creation of jobs with high salaries to allow the owners to enjoy a high level of income.

"We focused mainly on raising the income level through the creation of job opportunities for highly-skilled citizens," he added.

Meanwhile, Najib said his selfie with the Saudi Ruler was an opportunity to show the human side of Saudi Arabia's monarch.

Taking the opportunity to capture

their memorable moments during the visit, Najib said he was surprised and delighted that the Saudi Ruler accepted his request for a selfie.

"I took the selfie with him and I said to myself this is an opportunity to show King Salman in a new angle because he is in fact a very nice person.

"I wanted to show the human side of King Salman, an aspect which does not appear evidently, especially when we adhere to the requirements of protocol and the other things we have become accustomed to," he said.

On King Salman's leadership, Najib added that he actually took a risk and posted the picture showing them together in a car on

Twitter and Facebook.

"But the 'selfie' somehow took both Malaysia and Saudi Arabia by storm, and both sides were delighted," he said.

So far, the selfie photo which was posted on Najib's Twitter and Facebook accounts had garnered thousands of retweets and likes.

On another note, he described King Salman, who is the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, as a leader with a lot of charisma, warmth and care.

"He has ample knowledge, especially with history and a great desire to encourage cooperation.

"I have a lot of respect for him due to his leadership role," he added. — Bernama