

'We must strive for progress'

PM: Nation must continue to develop for better quality of life

The Star - 31/8/2020 Pg. 2

By **CLARISSA CHUNG**

clarissachung@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia must overcome challenges to become a developed nation whose successes can be enjoyed by all its rakyat, says Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

In his National Day address, the Prime Minister said while Malaysia has witnessed many achievements, it must continue to develop so that every citizen could enjoy a high quality of life.

"The country's development is not just seen in terms of economic growth figures, the stock market index, or the amount of foreign and domestic investment.

"Instead it is about the source of income and quality of life of every one of you.

"Economic growth figures are only meaningful when you have a steady source of income, a comfortable home, quality education, good health, environmental sustainabili-

ty, and safety in order to lead happy and peaceful lives," he said.

He acknowledged that not everyone in the country was fortunate, with some having to work two or three jobs to put food on the table.

"Many also do not have adequate savings if they were to lose their livelihood. Some may be able to endure for one or two months but beyond that, they have to take on debts and struggle for their lives," he said.

When the Covid-19 pandemic struck the country, he said, the government deployed various aid to the rakyat, including Bantuan Prihatin Nasional, the bank loan moratorium, and wage subsidy.

As the country would lose RM2.4bil for every day business was suspended, he said the government decided to open up the economy in stages, while also launching the National Economic Recovery Plan (Penjana).

"Alhamdulillah (Praise God), today the economy of the country is now growing, with more than 15 million workers back at work.

"The unemployment rate has also seen a dip from 5.3% in May to 4.9% in June.

"I understand that many economic sectors were badly affected by the pandemic and will take time to recover fully. But I am confident that if the economic recovery trend continues, our economy will bounce back," he said.

Muhyiddin said the pandemic had taught the country a very important lesson of caring for one another.

"To date, we have successfully managed this crisis because we are prihatin (caring)," he said, acknowledging the efforts of frontliners, volunteers and ordinary Malaysians who adhered to the standard operating procedure.

He emphasised that the Perikatan Nasional was a govern-

ment that would always put the rakyat's welfare as its top priority.

"Perikatan Nasional is a government that cares for its rakyat (Prihatin Rakyat). I pledge to make this the main guiding principle of this government.

"In line with the National Day theme of 'Malaysia Prihatin', I urge all of you to imbibe the spirit of independence by caring for one another.

"Be caring towards our families, our friends, our neighbours, our workers, and all the people around us.

"Be caring to our nation as well. Protect its independence, safeguard its sovereignty, defend its peace.

"Insyallah (God willing), our beloved country will remain independent, free and sovereign forever," he said in his speech at Stadium Merdeka, the historic site where Tunku Abdul Rahman proclaimed the country's independence.