

**Full Text Of PM's Malaysia Day Message  
Bernama  
September 16, 2011**

My beloved Malaysians,

1. Praise be to God, with His permission and kindness, we are able to observe the 48th anniversary of the formation of Malaysia as an independent, sovereign, democratic, peaceful and prosperous nation.

2. The story of Malaysia is colourful indeed. We have evolved from a low-income agricultural country at birth into a moderately high-income modern industrialised nation today, as a result of systematic planning and sustainable implementation. Although our success has been monumental and most significant, it does not give us any reason to stop trying, feel satisfied and comfortable or take it easy.

3. For the continued survival and prosperity of the people in the highly competitive world of today, let us redouble our efforts to improve the national competitiveness through creativity and innovation and by stretching our resources in creating new wealth based on independent entrepreneurship. It may not be able to realise all these objectives without national unity, peace, stability and harmony.

My beloved Malaysians,

4. Reflecting on history, when the country achieved independence 54 years ago and became Malaysia six years thence with Sabah and Sarawak, many local people and foreign observers questioned whether a new nation, with half the population living below the poverty line, having a demographic diversity of unusual complexity, separated by the South China Sea and threatened with a communist uprising, could remain intact as a nation state, let alone be successful.

5. Evidently, Malaysia's achievements thus far, garnered through trial and error, were destined to be full of challenges. Looking at history, like a miracle in the early age of a newly independent nation, the challenges became all the more acute with the early adoption of a system and philosophy of national administration based on parliamentary democracy, constitutional monarchy and a federation when the acculturation process had yet to mature.

6. Prior to independence, the people of the 13 states which came together to form Malaysia never had the opportunity to choose a ruling government or even the pattern of its administration. Their existence was merely as citizens of colonial states accorded limited political privileges at the discretion of the administrators. Certainly, this is not a genuine political right arising from the citizenship of an independent and sovereign state.

7. Before independence, the people were given limited opportunity to choose their representatives, first in the municipal elections of 1952 and then in the election of some members of the federal legislative council in 1955. It was only after 1959, following independence, that the people began to be given the full right and responsibility to elect all members of the Dewan Rakyat and state legislative assemblies with the absolute discretion in determining the party that would form the government.

My beloved Malaysians,

8. Of course, we should be thankful because, from time to time, we were able to overcome every internal and external impediment which threatened democracy and personal freedom, such as the communist uprising, confrontation against the formation of Malaysia, racial riots, economic recession, religious extremism or racial chauvinism through prudent, democratic action based on the principles of supremacy of the constitution and rule of law.

9. It should also be remembered that during that period it never at all occurred to the government to switch the existing system of parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy to any anti-democratic system, no matter how tough the challenges faced. As recorded in the chronology of the country, owing to the May 13 tragedy, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister then in accordance with Article 150 of the Federal Constitution, declared an emergency.

10. One of the effects arising from the declaration of the 1969 emergency was that the uncompleted election process in Sabah and Sarawak was suspended. The subsequent development was that the Dewan Rakyat elections were carried out within a period of approximately 20 months later and the system of Parliamentary Democracy was revived when the country was stable again.

11. Nevertheless, the late Tun Abdul Razak, as the Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister then, who was entrusted to head the National Operations Council or MAGERAN, with absolute executive and legislative powers, never had the intention to retain the power longer than necessary.

12. It was abundantly clear that the late Tun together with his colleagues then were fully aware that the limitless extraordinary powers that they held could not be made a habitude for the sake of our beloved country's future. Instead, they appreciated that the absolute power was merely a trust to curb and prevent any tragedy and chaos.

My beloved Malaysians,

13. In fact, as a country that practices parliamentary democracy, the power to determine which political party would form the government, whether at the federal or state level, lies absolutely and without exception in the hands of the people. After more than 50 years of independence and almost five decades of Malaysia's formation, we find that the experience, maturity and wisdom of the people in the country in choosing a government that could ensure that the future they aspired for could not be denied by anyone else.

14. In fact, I have often pointed out that the era where the government knew everything and owned a monopoly on wisdom has long gone. The revolution in the fields of information technology, development in communication and sophistication in transportation had opened up competition as well as a wide and dynamic comparison in the ideas market.

15. Currently, public access to all levels of education is expanding in line with the corpus of knowledge that they possess. At the same time, sustainable economic growth, the reduction in the poverty rate and the social engineering initiatives and their effectiveness, have succeeded in raising the standard of living and created a significant middle class. Now, the preference and requirements of Malaysians have undergone massive changes compared to four or five decades ago.

16. Moving further ahead, administering a nation that emerged from the independence driven by the wishes of the people, the government is now committed towards upholding

the system of Parliamentary Democracy, Constitutional Monarchy, rule of law, the federation philosophy and principles of checks and balances between the three branches of the government.

My beloved Malaysians,

17. As many of you know, except for the emergency resulting from the (Indonesian) Confrontation of 1964 which has been implicitly revoked, all proclamations of emergency before this are still in force. Hence, realising the changing realities, taking the pulse of the nation and feeling the restlessness of the people aspiring for a more open Malaysia with a dynamic democracy where the views, ideas and concerns of the masses are given greater attention so that our system would be comparable to the other democracies of the world that are based on the philosophy "of the people, by the people, and for the people", the government will present a motion, under Clause 3 Article 150 of the Federal Constitution, to the two houses of Parliament for the three proclamations of emergency to cease being in force. It is time for Malaysia to forge ahead with a new paradigm based on new hope and not be constrained by nostalgia for the past.

18. In our nation building, while facing extraordinary circumstances threatening the security of the country and the well-being of the people, sometimes measures outside the norms of democracy had been called for. For example, preventive detention. Prudence in handling terrorism calls for preventive measures to protect innocent lives and property. This is a universally accepted truth.

19. From an Islamic perspective, this (preventive principle) is contained in the Syariah law aimed at protecting religion, lives, minds, ancestry and dignity, and property. The discipline of Syariah methodology deals at length with the need to prevent evil. One principle states that the ruler was entrusted to make a decision for the good of the many.

20. This is not anything strange, unusual or isolated. Advanced democratic nations like the United States and United Kingdom had formulated special legislation to handle terrorism after the September 11 tragedy.

21. The checks and balances that must exist in a modern democracy are between national security and personal freedom. Finding the right balance is the duty and responsibility of a government whose highest objective is the wellbeing of the people.

22. For example, the freedom of expression guaranteed in the Federal Constitution does not mean a right to slander and stoke the fires of hate. The government is also responsible, to take another example, of preventing anyone in a packed stadium raising a false alarm of a bomb. An out-of-control freedom like this will cause panic leading to injury and loss of lives.

My beloved Malaysians,

23. I promised in the maiden speech I made when I took over as the country's Prime Minister on April 3, 2009, that the Internal Security Act (ISA) 1960 will be reviewed comprehensively. As such, I would like to announce on this historic night that the Internal Security Act (ISA) 1960 will be abolished.

24. As a means of preventing subversive activities, organised terrorism and crime to maintain peace and public order, two new pieces of legislation will be formulated under Article 149 of the Federal Constitution. Basically, these laws will be aimed at maintaining peace and wellbeing.

25. Above all, the government will ensure that the rights of those involved will be safeguarded. Legislation formulated will take into consideration fundamental rights and freedom based on the Federal Constitution. The new laws will provide for a substantially shorter duration of police custody and further detention can only be made with a court order, except laws pertaining to terrorism which will remain under the jurisdiction of the minister.

26. On the other hand, the government also gives its commitment that no individual will be arrested merely on the point of political ideology. In general, the power to extend the detention period will shift from the executive to judiciary, except for the laws pertaining to terrorism.

27. In this context, besides abolishing the Internal Security Act (ISA) 1960, the government will also abolish the Banishment Act 1959 and review several other laws to ensure that they meet current requirements. Hence, we will not hesitate to amend or abolish laws that are no longer relevant.

28. The comprehensive review will involve the Restricted Residence Act 1933 and the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 where the annual renewal principle will be abolished and replaced with the issuance of a licence until and unless revoked. The government will also review Section 27 of the Police Act 1967 by taking into consideration the provision under Article 10 of the Federal Constitution on freedom of assembly, but with a principle that is strongly against street demonstration. Nevertheless, the approval to assemble will be given in accordance with methods that will be outlined later and after taking into consideration international norms.

My beloved Malaysians,

29. As a country, Malaysia and its citizens are at a crossroads. The choice we make today will determine the fate and the future facade of Malaysia, the motherland which we will pass on to our children and the generations to come. The question is, can we rise beyond, and challenge, conventional wisdom that we as plural Malaysians, with varying economic status and political ideologies, can come to a consensus to not to bow and give in to the ember of hatred and suspicions, which will surely drag us to the valley of disgrace. On the other hand, come and let us power a future that is filled with hope and dignity.

30. Let us have faith, that it is a strength and not a weakness to put our trust in the wisdoms of Malaysians in determining our future. If we take this as a mistake, what then is the meaning of our achievement today, what is the use of planning the country's development in a structured way since merdeka, what is the use of spending most of the country's resources each year to give access to quality education to the people, to free the people from the clasp of poverty, to build physical infrastructure and world-class information communication technology?

31. The answer is clear, that is, the measures which I have just announced are a precursor to an orderly and prudent political transformation. This is an important and necessary complement to the initiatives in the economic field and public delivery which the government has formulated and implemented since more than two years back in the effort to move towards becoming a modern and progressive nation.

32. What is certain is that time is not too early neither it is too late; this is the most opportune time for us to make and implement these major changes. We are absolutely

aware that, although some may think it is risky, we are doing this for our survival after 50 years of independence, after nearly five decades of Malaysia's nationhood. We are indeed galloping forth towards our destination to become a full-fledged developed nation.

My beloved Malaysians,

33. Finally, I would like to stress in no uncertain term that Malaysia which we dream of and one that we are currently building, is Malaysia which practices functional and inclusive democracy, where peace and public order are safeguarded in line with the supremacy of the Constitution, the rule of law and respect for basic human rights and individual rights.

For Malaysia, let's do our best and leave the rest to God.

Wabillahitaufig Walhidayah Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh. Thank you.

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