

**DPM: Don't question ISA move**  
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**By Adie Suri Zulkefli and Looi Sue-Chern**

**NIBONG TEBAL:** Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin has urged all quarters not to cast doubt on the government's decision to repeal the Internal Security Act (ISA).

He said the opposition parties which appeared to have been caught off-guard by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's announcement should not question the government's honesty in honouring the decision.

Describing the decision as a radical and bold move by Najib, Muhyiddin also brushed aside suggestions that the announcement was a political stunt for the general election.

"This is not main-main (game).

The prime minister's announcement was not only widely reported by the local media but also by the international news organisations.

"Yes, we can understand that some people, including the opposition leaders, were caught by surprise but it is something real.

"What is important is that the decision is for the rakyat's benefit," he said after attending a Merdeka Raya gathering at the Perda community hall in Sungai Aceh here yesterday.

Muhyiddin, who was on a oneday visit to Penang, was commenting on claims by the opposition leaders that the announcement was a political trick in wake of the coming general election.

He explained that the decision was not made in haste, as it was done after two years of review of the laws.

"This reflects the courage of the prime minister. It was not a response to the demands of many, although the matter had been raised over a long time.

" The decision was made according to the changes in the country's landscape and it was something that the people wished for. " Muhyiddin said the decision would complement the Government Transformation Programme and the Economic Transformation Programme introduced earlier under Najib's leadership as the nation was moving towards becoming a developed nation by 2020.

"We have initiated economic and government transformation, and we are now moving towards political transformation, which is linked to the political situation, national security, human rights and freedom of speech. This means we have progressed to a mature level." However, he said, the government would not compromise on national security and would introduce two new laws to combat terrorism and organised crime.

"Hopefully, the enactment of the two new laws can be tabled in Parliament before the year end." In his Malaysia Day message three days ago, Najib had announced, among other things, that the ISA would be repealed and two new laws would be enacted to protect the peace, harmony and security of the country.

Muhyiddin had earlier approved allocations, totalling several million ringgit, for the people here.

This included RM2.5 million for a local mosque, RM1 million for a new fishermen jetty in Sungai Udang and RM500,000 for SJK(C) Pai Teik.

Muhyiddin also said the government had approved an additional RM4.6 mil allocation to build a new school building for SJK(T) Batu Kawan.

He said this at a ground-breaking ceremony for the school on a 0.8ha piece of land belonging to the Penang Development Corporation in Batu Kawan yesterday.

In Bukit Mertajam, Muhyiddin said the government planned to take over the responsibility of state governments and pay the salaries of religious teachers in sekolah agama rakyat (people's religious schools).

Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, said although it was not the job of the Federal Government to take over this responsibility, such a move would allow it to support the schools better in efforts to strengthen the religious education system.

Muhyiddin was addressing more than 500 religious teachers at a meeting in Universiti Teknologi Mara Permatang Pauh campus.

He gave RM7.1 million to 35 SARs, government-aided religious schools and national religious secondary schools in Penang.

In Tasek Gelugor, Muhyiddin announced a RM2.4 million allocation to upgrade a market and a make-over for low-cost flats.

He said the allocations were approved following appeals from the Tasek Gelugor market traders to upgrade the existing market and the repainting work for four blocks of low-cost flats in Taman Retina, Permatang Berangan.

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