

Najib: Economy remains healthy despite global uncertainty
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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's economic performance has remained strong despite the continuous uncertainty in the global economy, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

"For the first quarter of this year, our Gross Domestic Product grew by 4.7%, with a massive 15.5% increase in the construction sector driven by the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) projects as well as private investment," said Najib in his speech at the launch of the foreign exchange company Travelex Malaysia Sdn Bhd here yesterday.

The company is a joint venture between the largest foreign exchange player Travelex Group and Sri Inderajaya Holdings Sdn Bhd.

Foreign direct investment also hit a record high of RM32.9bil last year, an increase of 12.3%, reflecting a high level of investors' confidence in Malaysia, said Najib.

Malaysia, he said, had also improved its global competitiveness ranking by going up two places to 14th position this year in a Institute for Management Development survey.

The rise, added Najib, reflected improvement in productivity and efficiency as well as in matters of financial and business legislation.

He said one of the priorities under the ETP was to facilitate and better enable global companies to make Malaysia their base.

Later at the *Jelajah Janji Ditepati* programme in Kulim, Najib dismissed talk of an Arab Spring uprising here, adding that the Barisan Nasional Government was not cruel.

"Even the ISA has been replaced with the Peaceful Assembly Act," he said at the Kulim Hi-tech Park.

Najib expressed the hope that Barisan would regain Kedah in the next general election, stressing that there was no reason to lose "provided Umno and Barisan leaders don't switch off their handphones, sabotage the party and backstab.

"Stop bickering and give priority to the people as this is not a party election, but the general election.

"Do not keep any grudge when you meet the voters," he said at a meet-the-people dinner held at the Kulim Golf and Country Resort last night.

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