

Najib Driven By Desire To Help Malaysia Realise Developed Nation Potential
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 21 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak says that his desire to enter politics was partly driven by a belief in Malaysia's rich potential and a conviction that he could help the country realise that potential and become a fully developed nation.

In response to a question posed by International Investor, an independent research and consulting group, on whether he expected to end up as prime minister after being elected to political office in his late twenties, Najib replied:

"It might sound a bit presumptuous to say that I expected to become PM, because that is of course dependent on the will of many people, which is something I will never take for granted.

"However, what I can say for certain is that I had the ambition and the desire to lead when I went into politics."

In a special interview published by International Investor in the just-published "Malaysia 2012 Who's Who", Najib said that in part, that was driven by growing up and "seeing my father delivering real, far-reaching change for Malaysia and its people."

He added, "I suppose most young men are impressed by their fathers' work and in some ways when your father is doing something that has such a positive impact on people's lives, I think it would have been a little strange if I hadn't wanted to follow his footsteps!"

When asked to elaborate on his statement sometime back that what had served the country well in the past may not necessarily serve it well in the future, he said that like all Malaysians, he was proud of the country's history.

"But rather than looking back, I am firmly focused on building our future. I won't be able to do that most effectively unless I assess the current situation and make the choices I believe are best for us now and in the months and years ahead."

He then explained why he decided to introduce new and radical measures to transform the economy, unite the country and "make this government the most transparent in Malaysia's history."

And besides economic and government reforms, he said he decided on major changes like repealing the Internal Security Act and further transforming the country into a mature, progressive democracy.

"This comes on top of other big reforms like a review of Malaysia's censorship laws, setting up of a bipartisan commission to address concerns about our country's electoral system and the adoption of the Peaceful Assembly Act -- and I will continue to make the changes I

believe this country needs as it moves forward in the 21st century."

Asked what would be the main challenges for Malaysia over the next decade, Najib said when he took over as prime minister in April 2009, the two main priorities were economic recovery and building long-term prosperity.

Having seen the Malaysian economy grow in the last two years despite the difficult global environment, he said "if that period taught us anything, it should be that countries can no longer isolate themselves and must work together in this new global era."

Other than tackling uncertainties in the global economy, Najib said the other major challenge would be to build a sustainable and inclusive economy and to work towards becoming a developed nation by 2020.

Saying that it would not be an easy task and there could be plenty of obstacles along the way, Najib said he had put in place a number of measures under the National Transformation Policy like modernising the economy, improving the public service delivery system and harnessing Malaysia's diversity.

"If we are successful -- we will not only immeasurably improve the standard of living of all Malaysians, we will also redefine Malaysia's position on the global stage."

When asked whether he could affect things as much as he thought he could do so now that he had become prime minister, Najib, being a Manchester United FC fan, quipped:

"Well, I couldn't stop Manchester United losing in the Champions League and being thrashed (6-1 by Manchester City) in the Manchester derby (last October), so I certainly haven't been able to affect things as much as I would like!"

However, he said that this was in many ways the age-old struggle for politicians -- you want to be able to make the changes you believe are best for the people and for the country but understandably you meet resistance in some quarters."

"Like many before me, I have sometimes faced this problem since becoming prime minister, but it is not something that has stopped me from being able to implement a number of radical and ground-breaking reforms in a very short space of time that will deliver real and lasting changes in Malaysia."

Najib said he believed that these changes were essential for Malaysia to take the next step forward as a nation.

"It is certainly my hope that, when we hold the next general election, the people will also decide that this is the case and will allow me to continue with a process of reform that I have no doubt is right for all of us," he stressed.

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