

BN Can Provide Business-friendly Environment, Says PM
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SHAH ALAM, May 10 (Bernama) -- The Barisan Nasional (BN) government can provide a business-friendly environment to enable micro as well as small and medium entrepreneurs grow their businesses, said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

The Prime Minister said such a conducive business environment can also convince foreign companies to continue to invest in Malaysia, thereby expanding local firms' business opportunities.

"We should put the correct perspective on this matter. Our entrepreneurs' future cannot be seen merely as a socio-economic challenge, it's not just a matter of business model, it's not about business prospects.

"Foreign investors will not decide to invest if they do not recognise us as a nation where the central government can implement policies that are friendly to domestic and foreign investors," he said in his speech when launching a programme for micro, small and medium entrepreneurs organised by the International Trade and Industry Ministry and SME Corp at Kompleks Karangkrak here Thursday.

The government, Najib said, does not put politics as a priority as it wants to ensure economic growth benefits the people including entrepreneurs besides creating more job opportunities.

However, he said, the Selangor state government has politicised the issue, citing the Projek Langat 2 to channel water from Pahang to Selangor aimed at overcoming the state's serious water problem.

"Without water, it is very difficult for micro, small and medium entrepreneurs, and even more so large industries, and it will also be hard on the people -- no work, no food, making them angry," he said.

Najib, who is also BN chairman, said the water supply problem in the opposition state is very serious, forcing the cancellation of 129 factories with investments worth RM3.8 billion and able to create 12,300 jobs as well as some housing projects.

"These factories have not been given permission (to operate) because the water reserve is at just 2.4 per cent. The margin should be 20 per cent, but in Selangor it is very thin, at just 2.4 per cent," he said.

Najib said the people in Selangor, particularly in Shah Alam, are among the most fortunate Malaysians as they enjoy various infrastructure facilities, business links and commercial developments as well as new centres of development, all due to the efforts of the BN government.

"We can all enjoy the benefits together, because over a 50-year period, the BN government has developed Selangor so well.

"All these amenities that we enjoy (in Selangor) today could not have been developed in just one term," he said, referring to claims by the the Parti Keadilan Rakyat-led Selangor

state government that the state's development is due to its efforts.

"The reality is, the development of Shah Alam as a new centre of development began in the 1970s by the BN," he said, adding a state or new development centre like Shah Alam takes over a decade to develop, spanning two or three generations.

Selangor's rapid development, due to BN's efforts, has put it ahead of other states with Gross Domestic Product of RM130 billion or 22.1 per cent of the national GDP in 2011, he said.

At the function, Najib also launched a RM500 million syariah-compliant loan fund to help SMEs come up with innovative products and services for commercialisation.

He said eligible SMEs can apply from the fund from July and the government will give a two per cent rebate of the financing profit to the borrower.

The government has approved micro credit loans totalling RM2 billion under the TEKUN scheme since 1998, he added.

Najib said the government has also introduced a RM10 million emergency fund to help SMEs affected by natural disasters.

About one million SMEs nationwide are playing a crucial role in the country's economic growth, he noted.

Also present were International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, his deputy Datuk Mukhriz Tun Mahathir, and Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Noh Omar.

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