

**Defend Independence To Propel Country To Greater Heights - Najib  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 1 (Bernama) -- Calling on the people to maintain unity in defending the independence, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has called on the people to join hands to propel the country to greater heights.

The prime minister urged the people to unite and work with the leaders to ensure the success of the country's transformation agenda.

He said after 55 years of independence, Malaysia was now be considered a successful, increasingly rich, prosperous and strong country.

"Be aware that the independence knocked our door only once. Let us struggle to defend the independence firmly in every noon and corner the country at all times.

"We should shore up our defence when our adversaries and the opposition try to put the country in disarray," he said when addressing over 150,000 people at the "Merdeka 55: Janji Ditepati" (promises fulfilled) gathering in conjunction with the Merdeka Day celebration at National Stadium, Bukit Jalil here Friday night.

Present were the prime minister's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and his wife, Puan Sri Norainee Abdul Rahman, Cabinet ministers, and Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders.

The country is led by leaders who are continuing the struggle laid down by the founders who fought for the independence, said Najib, adding that the leaders and the people were not working hand in hand to fulfil the independence for the third generation.

"So do not let your guard down, do not be complacent even for a moment. Never turn your back on the struggle," he said.

Citing Malaysia's resounding success, he said the economy grew 5.4 per cent in the second quarter of this year, the value of Bursa Malaysia had hit RM1,410 billion, and Malaysia had become the world's third biggest Initial Public Offering (IPO) after the United States and China.

He said the first phase of the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) implemented since 2010 to raise the standard of living of the people would come to a close at the end of the year while the second phase would be launched early next year.

"We can compete with great economic power if we implement policies and programmes that have planned correctly.

"This is our success. Hence, we must ask ourselves, where we are taking Malaysia, whether to the pinnacle of success or to the valley of doom. The choice is in our hands," he said.

He said the results of macro successes achieved were distributed to the people through the like of the People's 1Malaysia Assistance (BR1M), the 1Malaysia clinics, the 1Malaysia People's Shops (KR1M), financial assistance to students, and the 1Malaysia Textile Shops.

Najib said the government would launch the 1Malaysia Bookstore soon to encourage the people to enrich their knowledge.

On the theme of the 'Merdeka' celebration, "Janji Ditepati", he said it was not merely promises fulfilled by the government over the years, but also the promise made by the people to come together with the government to ensure stability, peace and prosperity in the country.

Describing the gathering and performances as cool, energetic and inspirational, the prime minister said they portrayed that Malaysians could put aside their differences of opinion and misunderstanding to unite and display their patriotism and love for the nation in celebrating the Independence Day.

"If this depicts our generation X and Y, then if I won't be wrong that the picture convinces us that the future of our country is bright and filled with successes," he said.

At the function, the prime minister presented awards to the winners of the 21st Century Framework Competition, Prosperous Village and Outstanding Achievements to young icons in several areas.

They are national badminton player Datuk Lee Chong Wei, singer Yunalis Zarai (Yuna), national squash queen Datuk Nicol Ann David, national diving queen Pandelega Rinong Pamg, and a disabled youth, who is active in social work, Muhammad Zhariff Afandi.

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