

**Sabah Decision To Join Malaysia 50 Years Ago Bold, Correct - Najib Bernama
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KOTA KINABALU, Sept 17 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the decision of Sabahans and their leaders to join Malaysia 50 years ago as bold and correct.

The decision which led to the formation of a new constitution at federal and state level had brought progress currently enjoyed by Sabahans.

Najib listed three things that proved that the decision by Sabah is correct.

"Firstly, although separated by the South China Sea, we feel very close to each other. I feel close to the hearts of Sabahans.

"Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, federal ministers and government officials from peninsula feel they are accepted as a large family," he said at 50 Years Malaysia Day celebration of Sabah in Malaysia in Taman Prince Philip, Tanjung Aru here Monday night.

Also present were the Prime Minister's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman and wife, Datin Seri Faridah Tussin and Minister of Communications and Multimedia Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek.

Najib said although Malaysians in Sabah and peninsular have different dialects, it did not stop them from strengthening ties and understanding to form a united nation.

"We differ in terms of pronunciation. In peninsular, we say 'tetap' but in Sabah, they say 'tatap'. What is important is inside the heart, the blood flowing in our body and the soul cannot be separated."

He said secondly, the people's unity forged over 50 years managed to deflect threats from within and outside the country in defence of national sovereignty.

For example, when members of security were killed by foreign intruders in Lahad Datu, none of their children, wives and family members questioned why they were killed on the battle field.

Thirdly, Sabah had undergone drastic change which saw the 58.3 percent poverty rate in 1976 dropped to 19.7 per cent in 2009 and declined to 8.1 percent in 2012.

"Insya Allah, the Sabah poverty rate in 2018 will be reduced to 3 percent," Najib said.

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