

**Malaysia Can Achieve Developed Nation Status By 2018 - Muhyiddin  
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KOTA KINABALU, Oct 1 (Bernama) -- Malaysia can achieve developed nation status by 2018, said Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

"Some economists who analysed the economy of Malaysia told Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and I in a cabinet meeting that Malaysia can achieve the status of developed nation and a high income-economy earlier, maybe by 2018, two years earlier than (the targeted year of) 2020," he said.

Thus, he called on university students to back the government in its effort to achieved this lofty goal (developed nation status by 2020).

Muhyiddin said undergraduates as the country's frontline leaders would have a great responsibility in further improving the development of the nation in the future.

He was speaking at a gathering of students of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Sabah branch at UMS' Dewan Canselor here Tuesday.

Also present were Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman and UMS vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah.

Muhyiddin, who is also Education Minister, said the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) had succeeded in raising the per capita income of the people from US\$320 during Merdeka (1957) to US\$9,970 last year.

"The per capita income of the people showed a vast improvement from the time we achieved independence at US\$320 to US\$1,820 (1980); US\$2,370 in 1990 to US\$6,700 in 2009 to US\$9,700 in 2011 and US\$9,970 last year," he said.

As such, he said the government was targeting the per capita income of the people to surpass US\$15,000 which could be met based on various efforts and policies taken to develop the nation.

According to him, the development achieved by the country also created employment opportunities which reduced unemployment to an estimated three per cent now.

"It is estimated that a total of three million foreigners are working in Malaysia with two million entering through proper channels while a million entered illegally.

"It means we have plenty of opportunities and in the few years under the National Transformation Policy, we have created 3.3 million jobs and there should be no unemployment if we are not choosy or have the entrepreneur skills to start one's own business," he said.

At the function, Muhyiddin and Musa witnessed the handing over of a new UMS resident college from the developer to Dr Mohd Harun. The college comprising three apartment blocks has 384 units which can accommodate 2,688 students.

Meanwhile, at the groundbreaking ceremony of the Kepayan Ridge People's Housing Project (PPR) here which was performed by Muhyiddin, Musa said the state government would give its full cooperation to the federal government in developing housing for the people especially under the PPR programme.

"Sabah will continue to be developed as promised during the general election," he said.

Also present were State Legislative Assembly Speaker Datuk Seri Salleh Tun Said, Sabah Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Seri Yahya Hussin, Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan and State Local Government and Housing Minister Datuk Hajiji Noor.

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