

**Muslims Should Take Full Advantage Of Ramadan To Strengthen Unity And Ties - Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, June 17 (Bernama) -- Muslims should take full advantage of Ramadan to strengthen unity and ties among the community which has been the foundation of the country's development, said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

In his message Wednesday in conjunction with Ramadan, the prime minister said the country's stability and prosperity were interrelated to the strong unity built all this while.

"Alhamdulillah (Praise be to Allah), let us all be grateful because with His blessings, we Muslims are given the opportunity to welcome Ramadan 1436 Hijrah.

"In conjunction with this blessed Ramadan, let us strengthen our connection with Allah SWT, besides our ties with our family, neighbours and our society of various racial communities," he said.

The prime minister also called on Muslims to prepare themselves physically, mentally and spiritually in performing their religious obligations during the holy month.

"Indeed, Quran was handed down in the month of Ramadan as a guide for all mankind. This month, with all its blessings and special facets, is always awaited by Muslims," adding that "Ramadan is a month for heightened faith and godliness".

In welcoming and celebrating Ramadan, Najib also called on Muslims in Malaysia to pray for the wellbeing and to extend aid to those affected by disasters and facing hardship.

"Hopefully, the assistance given would bring them some joy, especially with the arrival of Syawal.

"Finally, I pray that we will be able to perform our religious duties as best we can this Ramadan and for our nation to continue to be protected by Allah from any threat and danger," he said.

Yesterday, the Keeper of the Rulers' Seal, Datuk Seri Syed Danial Syed Ahmad, announced that Muslims in Malaysia would start fasting tomorrow.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin called on Muslims to rid themselves of negative attitudes and habits such as wastage, jealousy, being hurtful towards others and vicious gossiping so that the holy month could be filled with more meaningful practices in promoting the teachings of Islam.

He said bad attitudes could weaken ties among Muslims and open doors for outside elements to infiltrate and undermine the Muslim community.

"Ramadan is a month to cleanse one's heart and soul from elements that could weaken it, which could ultimately affect the ummah (community)," he said in a statement, adding that Muslims must be united to take Malaysia to greater heights.

On another note, Muhyiddin said while the country was being tested by various tragedies like the recent earthquake in Ranau, Sabah and the missing MT Orkim Harmonyyang oil tanker, the arrival of Ramadan this time should invoke the realisation among Muslims to always be prepared for eventualities and tests from the Almighty.

"Tragedies that befall us must be accepted positively although it is not easy to do so, especially for the victims and family members involved.

"However, each tragedy is a reminder and could be a blessing in disguise for us Muslims to be grateful for the good things we have no matter how small," he said.

In conjunction with Ramadan, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein urged Muslims to benefit themselves from the holy month by engaging in more religious and charitable activities.

"Be grateful that we can fast in a climate of peace and calm. Imagine the fate of our brethren in other countries mired in difficulties like war, oppression and brutality.

"Therefore, appreciate too the tasks of members of our security forces stationed at the border areas and all corners of the country as well as abroad in maintaining peace and security," he said.

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