

**Prime Minister Defends Malaysia's Record**  
**Bernama**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 21 (Bernama) -- Following are the highlights of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's remarks here yesterday to refute criticism directed against Malaysia and the government in recent months.

In the statement today, the Prime Minister's Office said the points were raised by Najib in his speech delivered at the 26th Tunku Abdul Rahman Lecture.

- \* From 2009 to 2014, Malaysia's Gross National Income grew by 47.7 percent.
- \* 1.8 million jobs have been created since the establishment of the Economic Transformation Programme in 2010.
- \* Malaysia's deficit has been reduced for six years running, and in each of the last five years, total investments have reached new records.
- \* Since 2009, the income of the bottom 40 percent households has increased by a compound annual growth rate of 12 percent, even higher than the national average of 8 percent.
- \* Through the implementation of minimum wage legislation, the government has lifted 2.9 million people immediately out of absolute poverty.
- \* Unemployment has declined from 3.7 percent in 2009 to just under 3 per cent.
- \* In a report entitled "Favourable Prospects for Malaysia's Diversified Economy", the IMF recognised Malaysia's progress and expressed confidence that the country's growth was likely to remain healthy in 2015, despite lower energy prices.
- \* The World Bank and World Economic Forum rank Malaysia amongst the top nations globally for ease of doing business and competitiveness, with Bloomberg rating Malaysia as the world's 5th most promising emerging market in 2015.
- \* In January, Moody's maintained Malaysia's A3 rating with a positive outlook.
- \* In February, Standard and Poor's maintained Malaysia's A- rating with a stable outlook.
- \* More recently, Fitch maintained Malaysia's A- rating - and upgraded its outlook from negative to stable.
- \* On the social front, the Prime Minister noted that his Government has overseen the greatest expansion of liberties in the country's history.

\* This has included, amongst others, the repeal of the ISA and Emergency Ordinances, the Banishment Act, and the Restricted Residences Act.

\* The introduction of legislation such as the Peaceful Assembly Act, which changed the law to allow Malaysia's vibrant student community to participate in politics.

\* The Prime Minister made clear that "with freedom comes responsibility".

\* On the international stage, Malaysia's recent successes as evident in the country's chairmanship of ASEAN, and its election to the UN Security Council.

\* Its improved relationships with countries such as the US and China. These represent just a few examples of the country's increasing leadership and growing stature in the global arena.

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