

**People First In TPPA - Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak reiterated that the government would always place the people first in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA).

He said this was reflected by the fact that the government negotiated for the Bumiputra agenda to be included in the TPPA and was successful in doing so.

"It is now not just nationally recognised - it is internationally recognised and protected. This shows that Malaysia has fought for and won a good deal for our people.

"We are committed to protecting the interests and sovereign rights of our citizens, and help them to grow stronger in what is an increasingly inter-connected global economy," he said in his blog NajibRazak.com.

The Prime Minister said the government had taken a transparent and democratic approach in relation to all matters concerning the TPPA.

Najib said that countless consultations were held with the rakyat; key economic stakeholders, policy makers and experts from various fields through the negotiation phases and in the run up to the ratification of the TPPA.

"We have negotiated and signed many regional and bilateral trade agreements in the interests of the Malaysian economy and the rakyat.

"These agreements play an important role in creating a more competitive environment, allowing for the greater provision of services, which benefits individual citizens as well as businesses - both big and small. TPPA is no exception," he said.

However, he said it was not an easy journey as criticisms had been thrown to the government that were clearly politically motivated and blinded with emotions.

Malaysia and 11 other countries inked the TPPA in Auckland, New Zealand on Thursday, which is set to expand markets, reduce tariffs and promote freer trade.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed signed the comprehensive 21st century pact for Malaysia that represents nearly 40 per cent of global gross domestic product worth US\$30 trillion.

The 12 countries include New Zealand, Australia, Chile, Mexico, Japan, Peru, Canada, Vietnam, United States, Singapore, Brunei and Malaysia.

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