

**Government to Continue To Bring Improvements, Changes In Labuan – Najib
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LABUAN, Feb 6 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the government under the Barisan Nasional (BN) leadership has always been concerned about the development of Labuan and will continue to make improvements and changes for the benefit of the tax-free island.

The Prime Minister said that although Labuan had become more interesting and dynamic, the improvement efforts were still needed to ensure its development and the people would live in comfort.

"Visitors to Labuan Island continue to grow. In 2010, the number of visitors to Labuan was around 700,000 but has risen to over one million in 2014," he said in his speech at the Federal Territories Day 2016 celebration here tonight.

Also present were Najib's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor and Labuan Member of Parliament Datuk Rozman Isli, who is also Labuan Corporation chairman.

However, Najib said the drop in global oil prices, which is beyond the control of the government, had affected the lives of the people in the country including Labuan residents and initiatives to diversify economic resources were needed to face the situation.

"I want to see the tourism industry enhanced through more organised planning and implementation and greeted by the increasing tourism products by the private sector.

"For example, Labuan has many beautiful outlying islands like Pulau Papan, Pulau Burung, Pulau Rusukan Kecil and Pulau Rusukan Besar, which can be turned into tourism products, to attract more international tourists," he said.

Najib said other measures that could be taken were to convince the private or public higher education institutions to open branch campuses in Labuan as it could help improve the local economy.

At the event, Najib also announced several measures to ease the burden of traders in Labuan including reducing Pasar Sentral's first and second floor rental rate from RM360 per month to RM100 per month until June 31, 2016.

The rental rate per table at the fish and vegetable section at the market will be reduced from RM30 to RM15 per month until June 31 this year while a grant worth RM10,000 each will be given to the 1Malaysia Petty Traders Association, Harmoni Labuan Petty Traders Association and Pasar Sentral Labuan Petty Traders Association.

"To take care of the welfare of the people of Labuan, the government is committed to build 3,062 affordable housing units in three locations in Labuan. I hope that further action will be taken so that

the project can be completed soon," Najib added.

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