

**Malaysia Needs To Transform Workforce to Remain Resilient – Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 30 (Bernama) -- Malaysia needs to change its approach and transform the workforce to meet its needs, and ensure the country remains resilient and on the right track, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said under the 11th Malaysia Plan, the government aims to increase the productivity of the labour and highly skilled sectors, appropriate with this year's Labour Day theme - 'Skilled Workers are Movers of the Economy'.

"The government will continue to provide facilities to workers through upskilling, reskilling, multiskilling programmes," he said in his latest blog post 'Workers Are the Pulse of National Development' at www.najibrazak.com, Saturday.

Najib said the government would emphasize on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to meet the demand of 60 per cent of 1.5 million new jobs which require TVET qualifications by 2020. "Focus and initiatives like these, God willing, will lead to an increase in the wages of workers, and keep unemployment at a low level."

He said the government will continue to put the people first and take care of the welfare of workers, who are the pulse of the country's development and success.

"Since 1973, the government has recognized Labour Day as a public holiday, it is a day to appreciate the hard work and contribution of workers in Malaysia," he said, wishing Happy Labour Day to all who will be celebrating it tomorrow. Najib said the government had taken various initiatives to protect the welfare of workers under the 10th Malaysia Plan, including the implementation of the national minimum wage policy since 2013, which benefited about 1.9 million private sector workers in the country.

Among the other notable initiatives were the implementation of the minimum retirement age of 60 for private sector employees, and the proposed expansion of the social security protection of workers under the Social Security Organisation (SOCSO) to cover all workers, regardless of their income levels.

"The ceiling of contributions of insured workers have also been increased from RM3,000 to RM4,000 for the purposes of payment of contributions and interest, which benefit about 500,000 employees, taking the overall workers' compensation insurance coverage under SOCSO to 6.5 million workers."

The prime minister said at the same time, with comprehensive planning, the government has managed to keep the unemployment rate below four per cent. In addition, the government had also created about 1.8 million new jobs, and increased the female participation rate in labour force to 53.9 per cent in 2015, compared to 46.8 per cent in 2010. – BERNAMA

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