

**People's Welfare Prioritised, No Compromise on Security Issues - Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 30 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the government always made the welfare and interests of the people a priority and at the same time, never compromised on national security and peace.

The Prime Minister said since the country gained independence 59 years ago, the government had introduced ideas, plans and policies to build the nation.

He drew attention to Malaysia's growth as a progressive nation in six decades started with small villages, in the interiors and rural areas of the country.

"Today, by the grace of Allah, we are able to stand on equal footing with other nations which are fast developing," he said in his National Day Message 2016 at a special ceremony at Dewan Merdeka, Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here tonight.

The event was organised by the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia with the cooperation of the Malaysian National News Agency (Bernama).

This is the third time the prime minister delivered the National Day Message, which was broadcast live on television and radio stations. Najib had delivered the National Day message for 2014 and 2015 at the Malaysian Tourism Centre and the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre respectively.

Najib added that by the grace of Allah, compared to the uncertain global scenario like in the Middle East, the people should be thankful that the nation has remained peaceful and safe.

His reminder that members of the armed and security forces should be appreciated for the sacrifices they made for Malaysia's peace was greeted by thundering applause which rang throughout the Dewan Merdeka.

In his 45-minute speech, Najib said the 11th Malaysia Plan he tabled in May 2015 was the nation's final springboard to become for the country to become a High-Income Advanced Economy.

He said despite the turbulent global economic slowdown, the Barisan Nasional (BN) government continued to make wise decisions and was a responsible government so that the people were not burdened.

He said efforts to build affordable homes for the people were being carried out through various initiatives such as the 1Malaysia People's Housing Project (PR1MA) and the Rumah Mesra Rakyat Scheme as well as the First Home Deposit Scheme and allocations for the Abandoned Private Housing Project Recovery.

In addition, he said the government had also approved more than 82,000 residential units under the

1Malaysia Civil Servants Housing Initiative in appreciation of government servants.

Najib also stressed that he wanted history to remember the serious efforts made by his government in implementing the best network of public transportation to meet present-day and future demands.

He said the government was committed to several medium and mega-scale public transportation projects such as the Ampang and Kelana Jaya LRT route extensions which would benefit about 300,000 commuters as well as the LRT3 project for the Bandar Utama-Klang 36km-route with 25 stations which are expected to be completed by 2020.

"Personally and on behalf of the government and the people, I cannot wait for the operations of the first phase of the Sungai Buloh-Kajang route which will be launched on Dec 15 this year," he said.

Najib also touched on the success of the National Blue Ocean Strategy which among others reduced national expenditure by RM3.5 billion through strategic collaborations between the Royal Malaysia Police and the Malaysian Armed Forces.

He said the BN government also introduced the Urban Transformation Centre which benefited more than 35 million people in their transactions involving government services, as well as the 1Malaysia People's Assistance Programme (BR1M) for those in need.

"At the same time, various efforts and programmes carried out by the government such as the minimum wage, skills training, led to the overall household income of the B40 group rising rapidly compared to other groups like M40," he said.

B40 refers to 40 per cent of the population in the lower income group while M40 is the 40 per cent in the lower middle class.

In education, Najib said almost 90 per cent of fees in public universities were borne by the government while education at the primary and secondary level was free.

On health, Najib noted that government hospitals provided various kinds of treatments for patients and that even child delivery was almost free.

"I was recently informed by a friend who worked with the government that his father was admitted into the National Heart Institute to undergo coronary angiogram. The fee charged was only RM12 compared to the thousands of ringgit (he would have to pay) if at a private hospital," he said.

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