

## **ASEAN Continues To Progress As Long As Members Maintain Ties, Cooperation - Najib**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 26 (Bernama) -- ASEAN will continue to progress and succeed as long as its members maintain close ties and cooperation, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Najib, who will lead the Malaysian delegation to the 30th ASEAN Summit and Related Meetings in Metro Manila, Philippines, said the close ties and cooperation between its 10-member countries in Southeast Asia must not just to be maintained but should be further increased and improved from time to time.

"The GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of Asean countries in 2016 was US\$2.5 trillion, placing the region as the world s seventh largest economy. Based on projection, the world s economic experts are confident that Asean would be able to leap high as the fourth largest economy by 2050," he said in his official blog <http://www.najibrazak.com> posting tonight.

On the event, Najib said it was now the 50th anniversary since the Bangkok Declaration which was signed by Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia, followed by other Southeast Asian countries such as Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia in the subsequent years.

"Since that day, the region and Asean member countries have been progressing well and ahead, not just in terms of the achievement of each country individually but also our achievement as a region until Asean is dubbed as among the most successful regional associations in the world," he said.

According to a statement by the Foreign Ministry, the prime ministry would be accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor; Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman; International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed; and Minister in the Prime Minister s Department Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Dahlan.

Najib is also expected to deliver a keynote speech at the 'Prosperity For All Summit', organised by the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC).

The event, held from April 26 to 29, would also focus on driving growth through micro and small entrepreneurs in trade, services and agriculture.

The statement also said the summit aims to pursue genuine and inclusive growth and prosperity for the entire Asean Community.

In addition, the prime minister is also expected to hold several bilateral discussions with his counterparts from ASEAN member states on the sidelines of the summit.

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