

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AT THE CEREMONY OF THE LAYING OF
THE FOUNDATION STONE OF MASJID
NEGARA, KUALA LUMPUR ON 27TH
FEBRUARY, 1963

Their Majesties the Yang Di Pertuan Agong¹ and the Raja Permaisuri Agong², His Highness the Sultan of Brunei³, the Hon'ble the Prime Minister⁴, Their Excellencies, the Hon'ble Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank God, the Most High, who has allowed us today to assemble here on this blessed day and month to bring to fruition on historical event, that is the laying of the foundation stone of Masjid Negara which has been planned these past few years.

As Chairman of the Central Building Committee of Masjid Negara, I am happy to convey our thanks to Their Majesties the Yang Di Pertuan Agong and the Raja Permaisuri Agong for their gracious presence here this afternoon, and to His Majesty the Yang Di Pertuan Agong for his consent to lay the foundation stone of Masjid Negara. I also express our thanks to His Highness the Sultan of Brunei who has taken so much trouble to come here to attend this ceremony. We also thank the Hon'ble the Prime Minister, Their Excellencies and all those who are present here.

It is not necessary for me to give a long explanation as to how important Masjid Negara, when completed, will be to the nation and to the country. This mosque will become a symbol of our struggle, our national unity and national society. This mosque will give content to our Federation constitution which has made

1 D.Y.M.M. Tuanku Syed Putra ibni Almarhom Syed Hassan Jamalullail.

2 D.Y.M.M. Tengku Budriah binti Almarhom Tengku Ismail.

3 Sir Omar Ali Saifuddin.

4 Tuanku Abdul Rahman Putra Alhaj.

Islam the official religion of our country. Masjid Negara also expresses the blessings and the proof of close co-operation between the Federal Government, the State Governments and all the people of this country, and shows that the inhabitants of this country of all races and religions have a close tie and understanding between each other. Truly, this building depicts the symbol of unity that exists among all races of various religious faiths. Many non-Muslims of this country have liberally donated to the mosque fund.

I am happy to mention in brief the history of the plan to build this Masjid Negara. At the time nearing the independence day of the Federation of Malaya before August 1957, the Alliance Government have taken the decision to create a symbol of ever-lasting memory of the achievement of the independence of our country on August 31, 1957. It was proposed that the symbol should be in the form of a mosque erected in the Capital, Kuala Lumpur. To achieve this great aim, the subject was discussed with the State Governments, the Mentris Besar and Chief Ministers and at a Conference of Rulers. As a result it was agreed to build a mosque and name it Masjid Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra as a tribute from the people of this country to the services rendered by the Tunku in leading the people of this country to independence status, the sovereignty of our nation in our country. But, after the decision was taken, the Tunku himself suggested that the mosque should be named Masjid Negara, to become the symbol of the unity of our people and country.

Various sites have been proposed for the mosques, but on the wise guidance of the Tunku the present site has been chosen because it is in the centre of the Capital, easy for the people to come to congregate. Also this site is near the main road and the railway station. Our intention in building this mosque is that it should be a place of worship and it should be beautiful and spacious enough for use from time to time. Further more, its style should be in harmony with the spirit and aspiration of the people of the present time so that this building will really be not only a place of worship, but also a place for the ever-lasting memory of the independence of our country.

The cost of building this mosque was at first estimated to be not more than \$6 million. But this estimate is sufficient only if we have no extraordinary expenditure, such as expenditure on the preparation of site. As we have now to meet the cost of the inevitable works of filling and piling the site, the estimate of \$6 million is found insufficient. It is now estimated the cost will reach a figure of \$10 million. The work that makes the cost exceed the original estimate is the cost of filling the site of the mosque as you all know that this site was originally a low ground. It has been filled up and now has become a high ground as you can see it now.

As you all are aware, the cost of building this mosque is borne by the Federation Government, the State Governments as well as the people. The Central Committee has recommended that the Federation Government should contribute \$4% million, each of the State Governments in the Federation \$2 million and the balance to come from donations by the people of this country. Money which has been collected amounts to about \$5 million, now being spent, and a large portion of it came from the contributions of the Federation and the State Governments and donations from commercial firms. I take this opportunity to thank all the people, commercial firms, non-Muslims and others who have liberally contributed to the building of this mosque. Therefore, I take this opportunity to appeal to all the Muslims of this country and also to all non-Muslims to contribute generously to the building of this Masjid Negara so that this significant scheme will materialise successfully. Ladies and gentlemen you all know the benefit and the blessing of pious deeds such as giving donations to mosque for God, the Most High says:

"Whatever is spent by the people who perform good deeds in the way which pleases God is like a seed which grows into seven ears and each ear bears a hundred seeds; God the Most High will double His blessings on whomever He pleases, God the Most High is the Most Beneficent and Knowing;".

This is a guarantee by God which one should not forget. God the Most High will bestow beneficence to people who do good in building the Masjid Negara. Apart from this, we have sacrificed

together in order to have a building to commemorate our country's independence which will be witnessed and remembered by our descendants in future as a building constructed for ever-lasting memory at a historical period in our country's history. Here, I take the opportunity to thank all those who have taken part in this scheme. I am unable to mention the individual names of those who have donated to the mosque building fund and to all those officers who have given their time and efforts to the scheme, for they are so many. To His Highness the Sultan of Brunei and the Government of Brunei, I express sincere thanks on their gift of money of \$25,000, which will be allotted to the mosque building fund. This money is part of a gift given by the Sultan of Brunei to this country in commemoration of the attainment of our country's independence. I express a special thanks to the Government of the State of Selangor for their generous gift of a large portion of valuable land for the site of the mosque, to the Railway Administration which has also given land, to the Police and several other Government departments which have given their co-operation and their consent for the demolition of buildings on the ground site so that the scheme could be carried out. I also express my thanks, especially to the PWD., in particular to the Architect's Division which has prepared the mosque building plan, attractive and satisfactorily to all, and also thanks to those officers who undertake to supervise the work which will be carried out by the contractors.

I am happy to invite Their Majesties the Yang Di Pertuan Agong and the Raja Permaisuri Agong and all the guests to have a look at the models and plans of the mosque. We are all sure to express our satisfaction and our congratulations to the PWD architect concerned, who has carried out his task and able to draw a very sensible and satisfactory plan. The shape of the mosque is very attractive and embodies all the requirements of a place of worship which is satisfactory as well as modern in form and in conformity without national culture. At (lie outset it was planned to hold an architectural competition open to all architects, both local and foreign. The subject was considered very carefully and at the end it was decided to leave it to the skill and inspiration of our architects in the PWD. Now we are grateful that our own architects in the PWD have worked very hard in drawing and creating a plan which is very satisfactory to us all.

The Muslims, who have experienced difficulty because the mosques in the Capital of Kuala Lumpur are very small for congregation, will surely feel grateful that this mosque will accommodate about 10,000 people in one congregation. The dome of the mosque has an inspiring shape in the centre, 100 feet high, and has a minaret, 240 feet high, which makes it the highest structure in the city of Kuala Lumpur, and it symbolises the letter "alif", the first letter in the name of Allah. Also, I like to mention here that apart from a place of worship this building will have other facilities, a hall which can accommodate 500 persons for religious congress and discussions, as well as an open space for Quran reading competition. There will also be a rest-place for travellers, which is very convenient as it is near the railway station. Nearby but separate from the mosque building will be erected a National Heroes' mausoleum. There will be another special hall for library and Islamic religious research. In truth, the Masjid Negara building will be truly a centre of worship and Islamic culture in our country. I take this opportunity also to express thanks to the members of the Central Committee and the State Committees who have looked after all the works in connection with the building of the mosque and also with the collection of donations, and I appeal to them to continue to do so to make this big task a success. I am sure that each effort given in building this mosque will earn praise and manifold blessings from God the Most High.

Lastly, let us pray to God the Most High to bestow permanent peace, prosperity and harmony in our country, and thus our pure and sincere aspirations will be achieved for the progress of our people in all spheres so that our country will permanently exist and prosperous and all the people of our country will have a proper place in the community of nations in the world. Since we have achieved independence, we in Malaya have marched forward with a pure heart and sincere intention to fulfil the wishes and the desires of the people in all aspects of their life. We stand firm on the policy of living in peace among the inhabitants, not only in this country but also in foreign lands. God the Most High only knows our aspirations and intentions, clean and pure. By the permission and the blessings of God, we shall march forward in our journey and in our fulfilment of our aspirations. By the blessings and His assistance

we have succeeded to some extent in giving facilities and progress to the people of this country in all places, in towns, in kampungs as well as in the nooks and corners of this country. The people of this country have been able to receive, in small or large measure, the benefits from the prosperity and the independence of our country. Let us be determined to continue in our journey and in our fulfilment of our aspirations, and let us pray to God the Most High that He protects us from all dangers and evil intentions from whatever direction they may come towards us in Malaya. We stand on truth and sincerity and we have for our guidance the teachings of God the Most High and to Him we submit all.

On this historical day and time when we are all gathered together to attend the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of this Mosque, may God the Most High bestow His blessings on us all in Malaya and may God perpetuate the peace, harmony and prosperity of our country. Now, with all respects, I humbly request the pleasure of His Majesty to perform the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of Masjid Negara.