

NATIONAL DAY MESSAGE 2018

By : YAB. TUN DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD, PERDANA MENTERI MALAYSIA

Venue : PUTRAJAYA, MALAYSIA

Date : 31/08/2018

Assalamualaikum and Salam Sejahtera to all Malaysians.

1. It is for the umpteenth time that we are celebrating the National Day. Officially, it is our 61st National Day, calculated from the announcement of independence on Aug 31, 1957, by Tunku Abdul Rahman at the Merdeka Stadium.
2. The Federation of Malaya, and later Malaysia, has been witness to many events since achieving independence from British colonial rule and becoming a sovereign state free to chart its own course in its own mould.
3. From that date, the government and the people have strived to realise that independence.
4. The challenges were not few. As a newly-independent nation, everything had to be done starting from scratch.
5. It was not something easy - almost all areas, experience and expertise belonged to the colonial administrators and intellectuals and very few among us had the capability to fully take over these responsibilities.
6. It was difficult even to implement certain portions of the administrative and legal systems left behind because these were designed to suit the needs of the colonialists. The local people found that it was inappropriate to fully accept these.

7. But we were better off than some other countries which had to endure situations far worse because the colonialists left them in disarray, without trained administrators and the appropriate legislation to implement.

8. Our country was fortunate because of the wisdom of the national leadership at that time which secured independence through negotiations and not rebellion and bloodshed. As such, the former colonialists were able to assist in terms of the security, administration and plans of the country.

9. Their assistance was not solely due to feelings of responsibility. It was due to the need for stability and peace to ensure that their investment in plantations and mining was safe.

10. The Federation of Malaya, which replaced the Malayan Union, was rich in terms of natural resources. This wealth contributed a great deal to the progress of the colonialists.

11. In this context, the independence gained will only be meaningful when we are able to wean neo-colonialism or economic colonisation from our tarnished independence. With our persistent efforts, we have been able to develop our country to redeem our wealth. One of these efforts was the 'Dawn Raid' to buy our Guthrie Plantation legally. But we were accused of having committed a seizure or nationalisation.

12. Nevertheless, we were still willing to accept foreign direct investment (FDI), including from the country of our colonial masters. But they were not allowed to interfere in the country's politics and administration. We preserved our independence.

13. Then, the Federation of Malaya evolved into Malaysia. No one can dispute or match the willingness of the Malays to compromise.

14. Although Malaysia had its fair share of races and ethnic groups, it remained peaceful and stable and developed rapidly to become known as an Asian Tiger. Indeed, Malaysia remains capable of becoming a developed nation by 2020.

15. Unfortunately, a change in the administration had brought about a change of policies and approach. The lawful systems of democracy and administration were discarded and replaced with other means. As a result, Vision 2020 became an empty dream.

16. Such was the damage and pressure that the people endured, so much so that they felt they had achieved independence once again when the 14th General Election brought about a change of government.

17. Yes, the people achieved success due to their firm stand. But the benefits do not come rushing just because victory has been achieved. The action against the criminals, too, cannot be fulfilled immediately.

18. Just as we disliked the ways of the previous administration, we cannot put into practice the methods that we have hated. It takes time to bring about an administration by the rule of law. But, believe me, the criminals will eventually be punished in accordance with the offences they have committed.

19. In the meantime, the people and government should work together to revive the country. Ours is a heavy task. But no power can come between a people and government working together.

20. We have seen how countries defeated and destroyed in war have risen again in a short time and progressed due to the spirit and efforts of the people and government.

21. We are also capable of that. We, too, can revive our country, Malaysia.

22. The government can administer well, exercise thrift, be disciplined and control greed. This is being done. The success in reducing debt is being seen, although it is still a little. The damaged administrative machinery has been restored. Insya-Allah (God willing), the actions being taken and to be taken will nurse the nation to health again.

23. But the people have to play their role as well. If the government is unable to provide money as in the past, which was due to the wastage before, it will jeopardise the recovery process. After all, this government does not steal public funds to give part of the loot to the people.

24. That's not the best way. This government will create more jobs and business opportunities. In this way, the income earned gives more satisfaction. This is returns from one's own sweat and, of course, it is halal.

25. In this context, the government will provide education and training as well as scholarships. Workers' expertise will be enhanced so that their income can grow.

26. We will raise wages according to ability. But it must be remembered that a rise in wages will be meaningless if the cost of living rises as well.

27. To ensure that wage increases raise purchasing power, productivity must be enhanced through more efficient management, increased worker efficiency, use of machines, robotics and automation, and additional investment by employers. The government will give incentives and rewards to those who raise productivity at the lowest cost. The rising prices of industrial products must be controlled.

28. The government will always help the people who are genuinely poor or disabled. They will be given aid better than BR1M, for instance. Giving RM500 or RM1,200 annually is not enough to enable one to live a comfortable life. Yes. BR1M will be gradually reduced but the poor and unemployed and those unable to work will be given more meaningful assistance.

29. We are celebrating the National Day this time with a sense of relief and comfort. Indeed, this is our second independence. We are free from the shackles of a ruthless regime. Our lives are more comfortable. This PH government guarantees justice for all the people, irrespective of race or religion.

30. In line with the achievements and feeling that we have experienced and shared, the theme of this year's National Day is 'Sayangi Malaysiaku'.

31. It is hoped that this feeling will remain with all of us. I am sure that so long as this feeling remains with all of us, Malaysia will remain strong and progressive whatever the differences, contradictions and suspicions that may arise.

32. Happy National Day. Hopefully, our aspiration for Malaysia to be progressive, peaceful and fair will remain forever. Love this Malaysia of ours.

Thank you.

Copyright of the Prime Minister's Office portal

Source:

http://www.pmo.gov.my/home.php?menu=speech&page=1676&news_id=8&speech_cat=2