

60 YEARS OF PEACE, STABILITY

22/1/2017

New Straits Times

Nation is successful because we set aside our differences, says Najib

ZAIDI ISHAM ISMAIL
AND NUR AQIDAH AZIZI
SEREMBAN
news@nst.com.my

MALAYSIA has come a long way in 60 years due to the peace, stability and prosperity enjoyed by the people.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the survival of a country could not be maintained if the people did not set their differences aside.

"Our country is complex due to our diversity and differences in race, religion and belief. But, we are here today because we have managed to set aside our differences."

He said the ability of the country to succeed was once doubted due to its diversity, which was expected to lead to disputes.

"Sri Lanka has only two communities, but they were involved in a long civil war. Our country was more complex when it was first formed. But, we put aside our differences and reached this stage.

"We tolerate, accept and celebrate our differences. With these, I believe Malaysia can step forward and become among the top 20 countries in the world in 30 years," he said at the launch of Wisma Ceylonese here yesterday.

Present were Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam, state MIC chairman Datuk Manickam Letchuman, Malaysian Associated Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry president Tan Sri Dr K. Kenneth Eswaran and



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak at the launch of Wisma Ceylonese in Seremban yesterday. PIC BY HAZREEN MOHAMAD

Negri Sembilan Ceylonese Association chairman Datuk Kumarasamy Sittampalam.

Najib said it was his responsibility to listen to the wishes of the people in the implementation of a new vision for the nation.

"The new vision must have the sense of belonging and the sense of common ground which say that we belong to the same community.

"Community and nation building is important. I must listen to the wishes of the people and translate them into actions and policies that can bring the country to greater heights."

Earlier, in **Lukut**, Najib said Malaysians should be grateful as the Goods and Services Tax (GST) here was six per cent compared with India's 23 per cent.

He said the RM41 billion collected from GST would be used to boost education and healthcare, and help state governments.

"My good friend Mr Modi (Indian Prime Min-

ister Narendra Modi) will implement a three-level GST, with the highest level at 23 per cent. So, we should not complain," Najib said at the 60th Diamond Jubilee Kelab Bell Belia Tamil Malaysia.

"If GST is abolished, the RM41 billion collected will not go to the government. How can we implement all government projects if there is no source of money?" he asked.

Najib also commended the Kelab Bell Belia Tamil Malaysia, the oldest association in Malaysia, for being instrumental in helping the Indian community since 1956.

"The Indian community represents 7.4 per cent of the country's population and the Indians have made immense contributions to the country.

"The government, on its part, will continue to help as we have set up two units at the Prime Minister's Department aimed at solely helping the Indian community."