

# Najib: S'wak made **correct** choice

BERNAMAPIX

> State is able to achieve much development and progress within Malaysia

**KUCHING:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak yesterday said Sarawak made the correct decision 50 years ago to form Malaysia with the Federation of Malaya, Sabah and Singapore.

"That is why we have every reason to rejoice as we celebrate the anniversary. The majority of Sarawakians then supported the formation of Malaysia as shown by the report of the Lord Cobbold Commission," he said at the national level 50th anniversary celebration of Malaysia's formation at Padang Merdeka here.

(Singapore left Malaysia in 1965.)  
"The celebration reflected the true feelings of patriotism of every Sarawakian towards Malaysia," the prime minister said.

Najib said Malaysia was formed after overcoming obstacles and today it is able to stand on its own as a sovereign nation.

He said he could see the enthusiasm of the people not just stemming from nostalgia but also from full confidence that in the next 50 years, Sarawak and

Malaysia will achieve greater excellence.

He said Sarawak is able to achieve much development and progress because of the good relationship between the federal and state governments.

"The relationship is rock solid through our political alliance in the Barisan Nasional," he said, reiterating that the federal government will continue to support Sarawak's development.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud concurred, saying: "From being one of the poorest states in 1963, today Sarawak is one of the most developed states in the country."

He said Sarawak will attain the status of a developed state with high-income level in the next few years as the per capita income by 2017 is expected to reach US\$15,000 (RM49,500), three years ahead of its target.

Taib recalled that although Sarawak achieved its independence from the British on July 22, 1963, it chose to join in the formation of Malaysia.

He said the decision to be a partner of the federation was made by the Sarawak Cabinet, of which he was a member as a state minister under first chief minister Tan Sri Stephen Kalong Ningkan.

**FRONT** **BACK**

**GOLD 22mm** **SILVER 40.7mm** **NORDIC GOLD 30mm**

**GOLDEN CURRENCY** ... Commemorative coins issued by Bank Negara Malaysia in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the formation of Malaysia, in (from left) gold, silver and Nordic gold. The gold coin has a face value of RM100 and will be sold at RM1,800 a piece. The silver coin, which has a face value of RM10, will be sold at RM200 a piece while the Nordic Gold coin has a face value of RM1 and will be sold at RM10 each.

## Chinese community asks prime minister to be fair to all

### PRESS DIGEST

BY **KONG SEE HOH**  
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**RESPONDING** to Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak's Saturday announcement of the Bumiputera Economic Empowerment plan to reward the bumiputras for their support in the 13th general election, the Chinese community reminded the prime minister that it had also helped the Barisan Nasional (BN) during crucial times.

Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (ACCCIM) president

Datuk Lim Kok Cheong said, "if it (the plan) is to reward (bumiputra) voters for their support in the general election, we want the prime minister to look back at the strong support given to BN by other races during crucial times (like the 1999 general election), for which they were not given special attention by the government".

"I believe he (Datuk Seri Najib) is a prime minister for all Malaysians, and will consider looking after the interests of other ethnic groups while strengthening the economy of the bumiputras. Otherwise how are we (Malaysia) able to compete in the global arena,

or realise the ambition to achieve the high income nation status by 2020?" he was quoted by *Sin Chew Daily* as saying yesterday.

Lim told the daily that at a time when the economy is slowing down, and deficits and debts are running high, Malaysia pressingly needs a plan that can stimulate economic growth.

He said it is understandable that the government wants to assist the economically weaker bumiputras and ACCCIM is all for it, but there are also other poor and disadvantaged groups which require government attention.

SMI Association of Malaysia

national deputy president Michael Kang urged the government to expedite the implementation of the National SME Development Blueprint to assist small and medium enterprises (SME) attain all-round development.

"As bumiputras are also very much involved in SMEs, the government should go all out to develop the SME sector.

"SMEs are the prime-mover of the country's economy, it is an important link in the chain and has an vital role to play in the country's ambition to achieve the high income nation status by 2020," he said.

Nevertheless, he pointed out that based on past economic plans, the new bumiputra plan announced by Najib will eventually also benefit other races.







Meanwhile, Hua Zong (Federation of Chinese Associations of Malaysia) president Tan Sri Pheng Yin Hua has suggested a "Non-bumiputra Economic Forum" to convey to the prime minister the needs and problems of non-bumiputras.



He felt that while it empowers the bumiputras economically, the government should also make efforts to ensure non-bumiputras also benefit from it.

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