

# (English translation) Prime Minister's 'Amanat Merdeka 2016'

By [Bernama](#) - 31 August 2016 @ 1:36 AM

Following is the English translation of the 'Amanat Merdeka 2016' Message delivered by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at Dewan Merdeka of the Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur tonight, on the eve of National Day 2016. The event was carried live over national radio and television.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. First and foremost, let us accord our highest gratitude to the Almighty for enabling us to gather in this magnificent and historic hall on this Merdeka Eve.
2. I am addressing you tonight not only as the Prime Minister or the leader of a political party, but more importantly as a son of Malaysia.
3. Standing before thousands of you beloved people from all walks of life and background, I am able to feel a very positive vibe that fires the spirit of nationalism, patriotism and a deep sense of identity.
4. To liven up the atmosphere tonight, let's give a thunderous applause to Malaysia ... our beloved motherland.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. I wish to begin my Merdeka message by putting forth several questions.

First: What's the meaning of independence to all of us, especially when the nation, with His blessings, is on the eve of its sixth decade of existence?

Second: As Malaysians, regardless of race, we should always remember who it was who led the struggle for independence.

Therefore, we have to vigorously safeguard our sovereignty and independence that have been championed by the leaders of our nation, spearheaded by UMNO along with the other component parties over the past tens of years.

Third: Most importantly, how do we as Malaysians ... regardless of the colour of our skin, race, descent or religion ... express and demonstrate gratitude for these blessings?

6. The question is ... is it enough for us to hoist the flag or gather here and there, without the spirit and a sense of appreciation for the substance, to cherish the freedom of a nation state?
7. As the Malaysian Ark sails smoothly on the blue ocean, we will never allow our nation to be punctured or torn apart by any wicked people.
8. Because ... because ... we will ensure that the Malaysian Ark with its outstretched sail will continue to advance by splitting the waves without turning back.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. From the time of independence on 31 August 1957, we have arrived at the age of 60 standing on our own feet.

10. What is certain is that the gift of independence is not only a blessing but, according to the learned and wise, it is an honour for Malaya that has evolved into Malaysia.

11. In the pursuit of progress, rural development will remain the main agenda of the government, and will be given serious attention.

Deeds of the Alliance and Barisan Nasional

My Beloved Malaysians,

12. Looking at the growth of Malaysia as a progressive nation over the past six decades, having begun as small villages ... in the interior and rural areas ... Praise be to God ... we can now stand tall among the fast developing countries of the world.

13. In fact, the 118-storey Menara Warisan Merdeka, construction of which began in 2014, is set to become the tallest building in Malaysia and the fifth tallest in the world.

14. It is a fact that Malaysia's success has been the result of the hard work put in by the Barisan Nasional government and its predecessor the Alliance Party through an efficient and systematic administration.

15. This government, which has administered for so long, has been able to maintain its excellent record of performance and achievement and placed Malaysia on a foundation of prosperity.

16. Besides, we should take pride that Malaysia's sovereignty has the blessings of the Almighty for it is obviously filled with success and progress, unimaginable, unseen, unfathomable by anyone over the past 59 years.

17. In fact, as many of you would know, we only faced criticism and sarcasm as to how a small country like Malaya with a multiracial population could unite to achieve glory.

Six Decades of Progress under the Barisan Nasional (former Alliance) Government

18. As such, soon after taking over the leadership of the country, I introduced the National Transformation Policy.

19. The policy is now into its seventh year of implementation, and has continued to produce encouraging yields.

20. This is all not empty talk, but the facts and figures of achievement, verified by authoritative international rating agencies.

21. For example, at the time that I tabled the National Transformation Programme report last April, the Government Transformation Programme or GTP achieved 99 per cent of the Key Performance Indicators in terms of the National Key Results Areas.

22. As for the Economic Transformation Programme or ETP, through the National Key Economic Areas, we achieved 111 per cent of the KPIs. Through the Strategic Reform initiatives, the KPIs were surpassed with 108 per cent.

23. Of late, despite facing an uncertain and gloomy global economy, Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product for the second quarter of this year ... Praise be to God ... was four per cent.

My beloved Malaysians,

24. The success was endless through the hard work of the government and the various agencies. For example, the Global Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum placed Malaysia on 18th position in 2015.

25. According to the Financial Market Development of the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Ranking 2015-2016, we are on 9th position as the only emerging market listed among the top 10 countries.

26. Malaysia also achieved recognition in the Ease of Doing Business report of the World Bank, occupying the 21st position in 2010 and progressing to 18th position in 2015.

27. In others aspects, as a model Islamic nation that is progressive and dynamic and looked up to as a role model holding fast to the 'wasatiyyah' (moderation) principle, on the world stage, from the economic perspective, Malaysia occupied the first place on the Global Islamic Economy Indicator 2014-2015 among 70 nations.

28. It is also with pleasure that I state that Malaysia is the world's largest 'sukuk' issuer, encompassing almost 55 per cent of the total global cumulative sukuk valued at over US\$320 billion as at end-2015.

29. These facts are sound proof that denounce the accusations by a handful of people that Malaysia is a failed state.

Maintaining Peace and Security

My beloved Malaysians,

30. Above all, the government will not compromise on the issue of national security. In fact, national security meetings are held several times in a month as a precaution against the threats of the enemy from within and outside the country.

31. Compared with the world scenario, we are sympathetic especially over the fate suffered by our Muslim brothers in the Middle East, where there is still uncertainty. Their countries are undergoing chaos, they are at war, and there is no peace in sight.

32. Generally, we are deeply thankful that the Almighty has showered our country with peace and prosperity.

33. In this regard, I call on everyone present ... let's give our deepest appreciation to the soldiers who have sacrificed day and night to ensure peace in Malaysia. Congratulations and a thunderous applause for every member of the country's security forces.

11th Malaysia Plan

Ladies and Gentlemen,

34. In May 2015, I tabled the 11th Malaysia Plan. This represented the final catalyst for the country to enter the arena of the High Income Advanced Economy.

35. Although the global economic crisis was still brewing, the Barisan Nasional Government continued to make prudent decisions and became a responsible government so that the people were not burdened by the current situation.

36. Thus ... matters concerning the welfare and interests of the majority are certainly given priority.

37. Basic among them are the floor on which we stand, the roof that provides us with protection from the sun and rain for the whole family. In this regard, we will certainly implement efforts to build affordable homes for the people.

38. For example, in appreciation of the civil servants, the Government has approved more than 82,000 units of houses under the 1Malaysia Civil Servants Housing initiative.

39. Subsequently, we have also implemented affordable housing projects such as PR1MA, People Friendly Housing, Felda and Felcra Housing, besides introducing the First Home Deposit Financing Scheme and the allocation for the Rehabilitation of Abandoned Private Housing Projects.

My beloved Malaysians,

40. When talking about the developed nations, public transportation formed the pulse of the daily mobility of the people. Public transportation becomes a necessity, which must be developed by the Government that is competing for development.

41. Indeed ... the fact is ... providing an efficient, fast, safe and affordable public transportation is a must for a nation that aspires to be a developed nation like Malaysia.

42. Thus, in the era of this administration, I want history to record the serious efforts of the Government that I lead in the implementation of public transportation projects that have the best network, to fulfil the demands of the present and, what more, the future.

43. In addition, the Government is now deeply committed to implementing several public transportation projects, large and medium scale, such as the extension to the Ampang and Kelana Jaya LRT tracks, which would benefit at least 300,000 users daily.

44. Last week, I officiated the LRT3 of the Bandar Utama-Klang alignment covering 36km, with 25 stations, which are expected to be ready in 2020.

45. In addition, I personally ... and on behalf of the Government ... as well as the people ... certainly are anxiously waiting for the operation of the first phase alignment of the Sungai Buloh-Kajang MRT, which would be launched on December 15 this year. InsyaAllah (God willing).

46. Talking about transportation, too, let us all give a thunderous applause and congratulations to 'the Pocket-Rocket-Man', the national cycling champion, who won the bronze medal in the Keirin event at the Rio Olympic Games 2016 ... Saudara Azizulhasni Awang (who is also with us tonight).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

47. Actually, since we gained independence 59 years ago, numerous concepts, plans and countless policies had been introduced by the government in achieving national success.

48. During the era of the leadership of this Government, the National Transformation Policy also saw implementation of the National Blue Ocean Strategy or NBOS.

49. With the grace of Allah, through the various initiatives under NBOS, since the year 2009, the Government has saved a total of RM3.5 billion in government expenditure, through strategic collaboration between the Royal Malaysia Police and the Malaysian Armed Forces, which had penetrated the inter-agency silo wall.

50. The Implementation of the Urban Transformation Centre or UTC, meanwhile, has helped more than 35 million consumers resolve all transactions related to government services.

51. In reality, in which country in the world do you find the government providing a One-Stop-Centre that operates seven days a week, from 8am until 10pm.

52. This is proof that the Barisan Nasional Government is very concerned about the people's need to facilitate all transactions.

53. Similarly with education. Everything is free of charge from primary to secondary. At the tertiary level, that is in the public universities, almost 90 per cent of the cost of study is borne by the government.

54. In terms of health, beginning with the various treatments for patients, right up to child delivery, everything is almost free of charge at government hospitals, except in complicated cases. This involves a total allocation of about RM23 billion annually.

55. I was told recently by a friend working with the government that his father was admitted to the IJN to undergo a coronary angiogram. The fee imposed was only RM12, compared with the thousands of ringgit it would cost if performed at a private hospital.

56. According to a report of the Khazanah Research Institute in page 13 of the New Straits Times today, the life expectancy of Malaysians is expected to rise from 65.5 years to 77.4 years for women, and 61.6 years to 72.5 years for men. This is a comparison from the year 1970 to 2014.

57. In addition, the list is too long if we were to mention one by one the various aid programmes carried out by the government for the people in sharing the joy of independence and national prosperity.

58. With regard to BR1M, although the government is sincere in helping the target groups who truly need assistance, there are groups who easily accuse and insult the recipients of BR1M.

59. Whereas, for the real life story of the individual rakyat, for example Puan Dayah AK Mamut, from a longhouse in Sarawak, who has four children, BR1M is an assistance and blessing that had eased the family expenditure and schooling of her children.

60. Meanwhile, based on the findings of a group of 35 economic experts in Britain, BR1M was the best method in assisting the target groups.

61. In addition, following the efforts and programmes implemented by the Government, such as the minimum wage and skills training, the average household income of the B40 has clearly risen faster, compared to the other groups such as M40.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

62. Talking about the GST, Alhamdulillah (Praise be to Allah), the confidence and political courage of the Government in implementing it in the face of opposition and slander by various groups, it is now clear that it has turned out to be a saviour of the Malaysian economy.

63. Subsequently, through the various Government policies that are inclusive in nature, according to the National Transformation Programme or NTP report, clearly ... regardless of race and groups ... many have achieved success in life and career ... thus changing the family fortunes for more comfortable living.

64. Meanwhile, looking ahead, we have not arrived at the sixth decade of independence to fail. In fact, we intend to see Malaysia continue to move forward as an excellent nation that the people can be proud of at the global level, not only up to now but way beyond 2030.

65. In this regard, if we wish to see Malaysia remaining sovereign and respected by the world as the glittering Eastern Star ... moments of unity must be nurtured and expanded.

66. So, tonight I wish to share the harmonious moments of the people of Malaysia, which are demonstrated through the Moments of Unity by the people of various races.

67. The first instance, for example, during the badminton singles final match at the Olympics recently. My wife and I had gone down to Dataran Putrajaya to witness the exciting moment.

68. What was interesting and special ... I observed that night, the majority of the supporters for Datuk Lee Chong Wei there were Malays who were applauding spiritedly as a show of support for the 'Malaysian Badminton King'.

69. This is among the various examples, Moments of Unity based on sports.

70. In this regard, let us offer our congratulations to Datuk Lee Chong Wei, who has come tonight. For the third time, he has presented Malaysia with the silver medal at the Olympic Games. Congratulations ... congratulations, Datuk Lee Chong Wei.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

71. I wish to share that behind his success story, besides the appreciation for his present coaches, Datuk Lee Chong Wei never forgets the deeds and contributions as well as the guidance of his mentor, who was his former coach, who had nurtured and guided him to success, namely Datuk Misbun Haji Sidek.

72. This is the beauty and magic of Malaysia...the spirit of unity and closeness...crossing racial boundary...mutual help, mutual appreciation,...

73. Not in the name of the Malays, the Chinese, the Indians, the Ibans, the Kadazans, the Murut, Dusun, Aborigines, the people of Thai descent, or others...but even more noble and important than that...everyone unite in the name of Bangsa Malaysia or Malaysian race!

74. Certainly everyone of you, give a loud applause to our badminton champions in the men's doubles and mixed doubles, who also contributed to the silver medals to the country, namely saudara Goh V Shem, Tan Wee Kiong, Chan Peng Soon and Goh Liu Ying.

75. Clearly, to us, all of them are heroes and heroines of the Malaysian race. On this basis, the government has increased the victory incentive by another 200 thousand ringgit, as a sign of appreciation for their success.

My beloved Malaysians,

76. The second incident is on the Nasi Kandar Stall that is most famous in Ipoh that is popular by the name 'Vanggey'.

77. The term 'vanggey' in Tamil means 'come, come'. People say if you visit Ipoh, it would not be complete if you did not eat vanggey rice.

78. What is unique about vanggey rice is that it is operated in a restaurant owned by a Chinese family, the Yong Suan Hotel and Coffee Shop, which coincidentally began operations in independence year, 1957. What is special is that the customers comprised people of various races and communities.

79. The nasi kandar vanggey in the restaurant is enjoyed together with The Ais Peram which is also popular in the Chinese shop.

80. I myself have eaten the nasi vanggey...which was packed to take away, ...one day, I will go myself to the vanggey stall, and for your information, the owner of the shop is also present tonight....Mohd Nihmathullah bin Syed Mustafa.

81. This is another symbolic story for Moments for Unity which is very interesting.

Ladies and Gentlemen

82. From the cultural point, another story which can be an example of Moments of Unity is that of Lat the Cartoonist, whose real name is Mohammad Nor Khalid...in his book which is very popular and famous, Kampung Boy.

83. His cartoons depict the true plural Malaysian community . I am sure almost all of us know the characters which are depicted in his stories.

84. Besides Lat, the main character, and his friends who include Malay children as well as other races, there is also the character of the English teacher who is Chinese, called Mrs Hiew, who is stocky, fierce and wears horn-rimmed spectacles. Then, there is the Punjabi man in a turban, with dialogue which is funny and tickles us.

85. Clearly, people of all races are fond of Datuk Lat's jottings and drawings, making them another symbol of the Moments of Unity, and the acceptance by Malaysians that we live under one roof in a plural and multi-racial community.

86. I understand that Datuk Lat is with us here, congratulations and an applause for him.

87. Similarly, the film *Ola Bola* which revived the spirit of unity among the people of Malaysia in creating a great and dignified nation.

88. Going back to Datuk Lat, I am told that he is the older brother of Encik Mamat Khalid, a famous film director in the portrayal of the real life of a plural Malaysian society. I am sure many know of his comedic-horror film '*Hantu Kak Limah Balik Rumah*' which achieved blockbuster collections.

89. Clearly, there are many factors which can be catalysts for Moments of Unity, which are not confined to sports and social-cultural areas.

90. Another example is when each year during the major festive periods especially Aidil Fitri, the friendship bond which promotes Moments of Unity through the Culture of Open Houses is obvious, even drawing foreign tourists.

Beloved fellow Malaysians,

91. Moving away from independence, the development which we created from time to time was for all the people of Malaysia. The government will not neglect anyone, even the smallest ethnic group.

92. At the core of it, in our eyes and our hearts, everyone and every ethnic group is 1Malaysia.

93. At this point, we should give a round of applause and appreciation to the National Diving Queens, Miss Pandelega Rinong and Cheong Jun Hoong who have done the country proud by winning the silver medal at the Rio Olympic Games.

94. As I said, it is clear that independence and its spirit belongs to all of us. Especially Miss Pandelega, a Bidayuh girl from Sarawak, who proved that a representative of a small ethnic group can also be a champion.

95. In connection to this, I wish good luck to the national Paralympic athletes who will be competing in the Rio Paralympic Games in September.

96. Ladies and gentlemen, independence is a blessing for all of Malaysia. Beginning from Perlis in the north of the Peninsular to Sabah and the interiors of Sarawak.

97. On this matter, the Pan Borneo Highway which is toll free, stretching over 2,325 km, beginning from Telok Melan to Lawas in Sarawak, then on to Sabah, from Sindumin to Tawau, is another symbol of progress, a free Malaysia.

98. The latest in Malaysia, we will build the High-Speed Rail which begins in Kuala Lumpur to Singapore. It will bring great benefits to connectivity and economic growth in Malaysia in that region.

How Do We Appreciate the Benefits of Independence Beloved fellow Malaysians

99. That is why in our effort to foster solidarity and unity, we do not want there to be Moments of Disunity, with Episodes of Disunity which can destroy all that has been built.

100. The point is that are we willing to let this country be destroyed in the blink of an eye due to the actions of a small number of traitors. As the saying goes, better to die with honour than live with shame. We must eradicate the traitors of the people and nation.

101. Today, we are facing not just enemies from outside, but also a new form of colonization which has seeped and poisoned the minds of the people, due to the dirty hands of the people in our own country.

102. In this matter, I am reminded of the noted freedom fighter, Mahatma Gandhi who said that independence meant discipline and acceptance of the rule of law.

103. Not like what some people are trying to do to topple the Government in an undemocratic manner, drawing up referendums, declarations or by instigating and poisoning the minds of the people to demonstrate in the streets.

104. Whereas in Islam itself, as discussed by esteemed ulama (clerics), "the end does not justify the means".

105. In my opinion, independence means standing on our own feet, in our own mould and our hopes. Independence means being free from foreign intervention.

106. More than that, independence means a transformation from backwardness to progress and excellence.

My beloved Malaysians,

107. Finally, in Allah we see help and remember!...we have one common factor as Malaysians, sharing one aim, one objective...which is the 1Malaysia Dream.

As such....

108. Let us all in Merdeka Hall stand and hold the hands of the person on your right and left ...(Make sure it is men with men...the ladies can hold each other's hands)

And...

109...Let us jointly declare that...We...Malaysians...One Heart, One Soul...Declare To Remain United...and Aim High...For Malaysia's Future.

Once Independent...always Independent.

Thank You.

– BERNAMA

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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak shouts 'Merdeka' at the end of his Merdeka message. Pix by Asyraf Hamzah

RECOMMENDED

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