



52nd National Day of MALAYSIA

The Daily Star

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT



AUGUST 31, 2009

Message

ON this day, Malaysians everywhere celebrate Hari Merdeka to commemorate the birth of the Federation of Malaysia fifty-two years ago. The principles that established our national identity in those early days continue to guide us now, as we enter a new period of greater responsibility and cooperation with the broader world.

Hari Merdeka should serve as a day for Malaysians to reflect upon how far we have come as a nation. We also want to renew our collective sense of purpose required to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Our drive for independence and self-determination began humbly in the shop houses, the rubber plantations and the fishing villages throughout the country. Chinese, Malay, Indian we came together in 1957 to defend our dream of self-governance and to forge a country out of our shared values.

These values reflect our dedication to community involvement, to working together and to creating a better future for generations of Malaysians to come. These founding principles will hold us steady even as we face a more challenging economic climate and other obstacles that we may yet foresee.

In the decades that have passed since we first celebrated Merdeka, our values have been tested. We have had to make sacrifices to preserve the national unity that we as Malaysians hold sacred. We recognize that our sovereign rights and freedoms must be earned with each new generation.

They cannot be taken for granted. Together, we must renew our commitment to work together to find common solutions to the challenges we face.

This commitment lies at the heart of our principle of 1Malaysia. It means that all Malaysians have a voice; that we strive for inclusiveness and respect. Our country is strong because of the plurality of our citizens and the steps we are taking to ensure all voices are heard.

Essential to the 1Malaysia concept is recognition that accountability and transparency are important ingredients for good government. The increased emphasis on performance and delivery to the people will support further liberalization of our economy and economic opportunity for all.

As Malaysians embrace change within our own country, we also are eager to explore opportunities to become a more active global citizen. The values that were born from our independence now compel us to play a more engaged role in brokering peace and fostering understanding within the Middle East, providing humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan, and helping to lead the way to economic resurgence in the ASEAN region, and in shaping a response to the current global economic crisis.

Around the world, Malaysians come together on Hari Merdeka to remember what makes us unique. Despite our differences and diverse backgrounds, no matter how far away from home we may find ourselves, the pride and unity that come with being Malaysian on this day overpowers all

that may divide us.

Our hope, our goal as a nation and as a people, must be to maintain this collective harmony on all days of the year. By doing this we may act as a model of how a diverse people can prosper together as one sovereign and independent state.



Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Bin Tun Haji
Abdul Razak
Prime Minister of Malaysia

Message

TODAY, 31st August 2009, marked the 52nd National Day of Malaysia. On this auspicious occasion, I, on behalf of the Government and the people of Malaysia would like to extend my warmest greetings and best wishes to the Government and the people of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. I would also like to convey my greetings and sincere best wishes to my fellow Malaysians residing in Bangladesh.

The two brotherly countries of Malaysia and Bangladesh have enjoyed strong and close bilateral relations since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1972. Our leaders have laid a strong foundation and the officials as well as the people have contributed significantly to the close knit friendship between our two countries.

Being co-members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Commonwealth, D-8 and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and as strong proponents of the multilateralism, Malaysia and Bangladesh share common views on major Regional and International issues and also work closely to promote peace, stability, and development in the international arena.

The bilateral trade and investment between Malaysia and Bangladesh is constantly expanding. Malaysia is today the 6th largest investor in Bangladesh and the largest among ASEAN Member States. The cumulative amount of investment until 2008 stood at approximately USD 1.3 billion. Bangladesh is also currently Malaysia's third largest export destination in South Asia.

Trade between Malaysia and Bangladesh recorded a significant growth of 65 percent in 2008 to reach almost USD700 million. Trade balance, however, recorded in favour of Malaysia. Nevertheless, Bangladesh exports to Malaysia grew by 66.7 percent in 2008 to USD55 million, mainly in transport equipment, textiles & clothing and processed food.

However, starting from fourth quarter of 2008, most countries across the globe were affected by the economic slowdown. Total trade between Malaysia and Bangladesh (from January to May 2009) too has dropped by 19.8 percent to USD214 million compared with the same corresponding period in 2008.

It is in this context that the Malaysian government has taken initiatives by organizing solo country exhibitions to promote Malaysian products and services as well as to encourage greater trade between Malaysia and Bangladesh. The most recent exhibition organized was the 'Malaysia Products and Services Exhibition 2009' in Dhaka where 16 companies took part in 2008.

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