



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak joins the people of Permatang Pauh at a luncheon at Politeknik Seberang Prai yesterday. PIC BY ROSLI AHMAD

## 'Federal Govt to continue providing affordable homes'

**GEORGE TOWN:** The Federal Government is committed to providing more affordable housing for the people, especially those in the middle- and low-income group.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said a holistic development concept was needed to ensure that the two groups had the ability to own equities.

"In our old economic policy, we used two criteria only, namely ownership, in terms of equities in the corporate world, and poverty, in terms of income per capita. But in a development concept, we must look at it more holistically.

"That is why I recently changed the original criteria to a wellbeing transformation concept because when we focus on the well-being aspect, it also includes the issue of property ownership as property ownership is more valuable than owning shares. This is because property has a higher value for our families," he said during a visit to JKP Sdn Bhd's low-medium-cost housing development project, Casa Anggun, in Sungai Nibong, here, yesterday.

Najib said the issue of housing development must not be seen only as an economic development project, but also the development of Bumiputeras, based on wellbeing.

"Wellbeing means property ownership is a main criteria. So what we have done is in line with the Bumiputera Economic Transformation programme, which I launched recently," he added.

Najib said the housing agenda had always been given high priority by the Federal Government.

"When I took over the leadership of the country in 2009, we did an assessment of what the people wanted, and one of the things they wanted was affordable housing.

"Affordable housing is a matter that is close to the people's hearts, so we gave a commitment to build a million affordable housing units nationwide," he said, adding that this development was in various stages currently.

Najib said when the government wanted to implement a housing project, it involved many issues, including identifying and acquiring land, either from the state or private individuals, as well as getting development orders from local councils.

"When we build houses, we must also make sure that our targeted group will be able to acquire the property without any obstacles, such as trouble getting financing for the property."

Najib said in states and developed places like Penang, if the Federal Government did not carry out such intervention efforts, then the level of property ownership would be low.

"The development on this island will not be a development which achieves social equity."

In **Butterworth**, Najib yesterday announced a RM45 million allocation for a religious school in the Seberang Perai Tengah district.

"I am feeling generous because of the extraordinary support here. It is time to open a new page in Permatang Pauh.

"I would like to announce a RM45 million allocation for SM Agama Seberang Prai Tengah," he said to roaring cheers from some 22,000 people, who had gathered at Politeknik Seberang Prai here for a luncheon.

The event called "*Jamuan Kenduri Bersila Bersama Rakyat*" saw guests dining on the field sans stage, chairs and tables.

It has entered the *Malaysia Book of Records* as the largest community luncheon.