

Najib denies bumi companies inefficient

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KUALA LUMPUR — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak dismissed yesterday the perception that bumiputra companies are inefficient when they are awarded projects.

He denied that the companies took longer time to complete their projects, thus incurring additional costs.

He cited the completion of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Phase 1 project as one of the success stories, where half of the RM21.2 billion contract value was entrusted to bumiputra contractors.

“Fifty-one per cent of the MRT Phase 1 project value was awarded to bumiputra companies and it was completed well ahead

of schedule and below budget.

“This shows bumiputra companies have potential to compete both domestically and internationally,” he said during the Bumiputra Empowerment Agenda appreciation ceremony at Pullman Bangsar here.

The prime minister also said projects would only be awarded to vendors upon careful scrutiny over their financial and technical abilities.

“There is a mechanism in place. It involves vigorous and transparent evaluation. Even I am not informed of the details until the day to award the project tenders. That is how strict it is,” he said.

Najib added bumiputra participation was not limited to projects in the peninsula as there were also opportunities for them in

the Pan-Borneo Highway Project.

He said their participation was expected to reach 60 per cent which should benefit bumiputras in Sabah and Sarawak.

“The Pan-Borneo Highway project too was unique. I was involved in drawing the lots for Class F sub-contractors in front of everyone and handed out the official documents to those who were successful on the spot.

“This shows the transparency of the system,” he said.

Najib said bumiputra companies have proven their abilities and must learn to spread their wings.

“Bumiputra companies can now compete with others, not only domestically but also globally. There is no longer a need for this so-called local ‘Ali Babas’,” he said.

The ceremony saw 17 vendors from 20 government-linked companies (G20) being recognised for their efforts in empowering businesses under the Bumiputera Vendor Development Programme.

The programme, established in 2013, is a government initiative to equally distribute the nation’s wealth and to bridge the divide of income which varies according to race in this country.

“As of August this year, the programme has successfully raked in RM114 billion worth of projects. This is a win for both the industry players and the nation’s economy,” Najib said.

He said government-linked investment companies and G20 achieved better Key Performance Index (KPI) targets last year compared to the previous year.