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THRIVING NATION

'GNI up by 50pc'

Opposition allegations about country's impending bankruptcy not true, says PM

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MALAYSIA'S gross national income increased by nearly 50 per cent between 2009 and last year, despite allegations from the opposition that the country is going bankrupt.

At the Asean@50 Commemorative Dinner and Achievement Awards last night, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said: "Businesses would not be

moving their regional headquarters here if they thought the country was going bankrupt," he said and gave examples of companies like Huawei, a global Information and communications technology provider and Broadcom Ltd, the world's largest semiconductor company.

"Inflation and unemployment have been kept low, while 2.26 million jobs have been created. We have secured record levels of foreign direct investment at a time when our opponents keep trying to scare people into thinking that Malaysia is going bankrupt.

"We are not interested in harping on old grievances, as one former leader still is," he said in an apparent reference to former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"We wish to work with friends and partners, near and far. This has led to our relations and friendship with many nations



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak with award recipients at the Asean@50 Commemorative Dinner and Achievement Awards in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. With him are Asean Business Advisory Council Malaysia chairman Tan Sri Dr Munir Majid (eighth from right), International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed (fifth from right) and Sunway Group chairman Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah (sixth from right). PIC BY ASYRAF HAMZAH

reaching historic highs."

Najib said Asean must feel real, relevant and tangible to citizens to realise its potential.

"We need to work on building that sense of cohesion, solidarity, support, unity, friendship and strength, which will result in greater prosperity and harmony for all our countries."

Hosted by the Asean Business Advisory Council (Asean-BAC), the event was part of the activ-

ities held to celebrate Asean's 50th anniversary this year.

Present were International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, Asean-BAC chairman Tan Sri Dr Munir Majid and Philippines Trade and Industry Secretary Ramon Lopez.

Ten Malaysian companies and individuals received achievement awards.

The highest recognition went

to Sunway Group chairman Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah, who received the Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions and achievements in Malaysia, other Asean countries and beyond.

The other award recipients included YTL Corporation Bhd, which received the Golden Jubilee Award, and Fashion Valet-co-founder Vivy Yusof who received the Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award.