

PRIME NEWS

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# 'Paralympians are national icons'

**PROUD:** They can be an inspiration to all, says PM

SEPANG

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday declared Malaysian Paralympians as national icons who can be an inspiration to the people.

Najib said he was humbled to witness the Paralympians' strong will to win three gold medals and a bronze at the Rio Paralympics.

"I had goosebumps when *NegaraKu* was played, watching our Paralympic winners getting their medals with the Jalur Gemilang wrapped around their shoulders," he told a 1,000-strong crowd gathered at the Bunga Raya Complex in Kuala Lumpur International Airport here to give the para-athletes a rousing homecoming.

Present were the prime minister's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his wife, Tun Jeanne Abdullah, and Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin and his wife, Nori Abdullah.

Najib urged Malaysians to emulate the strong will displayed by the country's Paralympic contingent.

"They have shown us that with strong drive and will, any shortcoming can be overcome and success can be achieved," he said.

"We are so proud of what they



Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** and his wife, **Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor**, welcoming the Rio Paralympic contingent at the Bunga Raya Complex in Kuala Lumpur International Airport yesterday. Pic by Osman-Adnan

have achieved. They will get the same incentives promised to our Olympians. We are putting them on the same level as our Olympians.

"Gold medallists will get RM1 million and a RM5,000 (a month) pension. The bronze medallist will get an additional RM100,000.

"Even the coaches, who are the unsung heroes, will be rewarded."

Malaysia finished 36th out of 176 countries at the Rio Paralympics, its most successful outing with three gold and a bronze.

Mohamad Ridzuan Mohamad Puzi won gold in the 100m T36 (cerebral palsy) and set a games record of 12.07 seconds. Muhammad Ziyad Zolkefli won gold in the shot-put F20 (intellectual disability), setting a

world record of 16.84m. Long jumper Abdul Latif Romly won gold in the T20 (intellectual disability) event and set a world record of 7.6m.

Siti Noor Radiah Ismail won bronze in the women's long jump T20.

At the London Paralympics in 2012, archer Hasihin Sanawi won silver in the individual recurve for the

W1 category while Ziyad won bronze in shot-put.

Najib also acknowledged Jeanne's contributions as the patron of the Malaysia Paralympic Council.

**Page 1 pic:** People giving a rousing welcome to the Rio Paralympians at Pavilion Kuala Lumpur yesterday.