

Striving to be a high income nation

PM: Local varsities must fulfil four main tasks

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PUTRAJAYA: Local universities need to fulfil four main tasks as Malaysia moves towards becoming a high income developed nation, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said.

The Prime Minister said the tasks were to create a knowledge-generating centre and the required manpower to carry out and fulfil the country's vision.

"This requires us to generate and create manpower with the capability and qualification to face the global competition which is constantly getting stiffer.

"We also want the next generation to be more educated so the universities should also be able to produce not just an academic person but a truly educated person," he said at the

National Academic Award presentation here yesterday.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who is also Education Minister, Second Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh, and Deputy Education Ministers Datuk Mary Yap and P. Kamalanathan were also at the event.

Najib said another task for the universities was to provide innovative solutions to local companies, particularly those in the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector.

Muhyiddin said new methods of teaching must be used for students in the 21st century.

He said learning needed to be student-centred and commended those who had replaced the use of "chalk and talk" methods with other innovative approaches.

"Twentieth century methods are no longer applicable for the 21st cen-

tury students," he said at the ceremony, where three out of the eight winners had won awards for teaching.

They are Assoc Prof Dr Raihanah Mohd Mydin from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Prof Dr Jayakaran Mukundan from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and Lim Chee Leong from Taylor's University.

Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Datuk Dr Mohd Rashdan Baba from UPM won the National Academic Leader Award for his contribution to the field of education.

The other award winners are Prof Dr Rahinah Ibrahim from UPM (Art and Creativity Award), Prof Dr Azni Idris from UPM (Innovation and Product Commercialisation Award), Dr Norhayati Ab Rahman from Universiti Malaya (UM) (Book Publishing Award) and Prof Dr Sheila Nathan from UKM (Journal Publishing Award).



Academic excellence: Dr Mohd Rashdan with his trophy during the awards ceremony in Putrajaya.