

PRIME NEWS

PM: Elevation of varsities key to education success

SELF-FUNDING:

Move will enable them to reduce burden on govt by being more self-sufficient

ARNAZ M. KHAIRUL
SERDANG
arnaz@nst.com.my

THE elevation of local institutions under the Universities Transformation Plan (UTP) will be the key towards achieving objectives set under the Malaysia Education Blueprint (PPPM), which is to be achieved by 2025, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said yesterday.

And key to the UTP's success, he said, would be local universities moving beyond traditional structures and evolving into more dynamic bodies capable of significantly reducing the burden on the government by being self-sufficient.

"It is very difficult when, as prime minister, every year I need to defend the need to not increase the cost of education, when in reality, the costs are in fact increasing.

"Thus, it is the universities and stakeholders that need to come up with their own programmes to ensure that funding for their expansion can be generated from within.

"They all have assets, all of which can be monetised. They need to work towards coming up with ideas that can generate funding and, in doing that, help the government.



Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** speaking to higher education practitioners and delegates at **Universiti Putra Malaysia** in Serdang yesterday. Pic by Abdullah Yusof

"This is a national policy under the National Transformation Programme towards an advanced economy and beyond," he said in his opening speech before his meeting with higher education practitioners at Universiti Putra Malaysia here yesterday.

Present were Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh and his deputy Datuk Mary Yap Kain Ching, as well as representatives of government institutions of higher education.

Najib also announced the new motto of the Malaysian Higher Education system, "Soaring Upwards", as the PPPM hoped local universities would move into the top 25 in the world by 2025.

"Those here are all aware of the

details and what is going to be implemented in the coming years," Najib told delegates before stressing on three key areas that needed to be focused on as the higher education system continues to be improved in stages as outlined in the PPPM.

"The first is the focus on STEM education (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), which is the key towards establishing an advanced nation."

He said English was the second area that needed to be addressed, but without abandoning Bahasa Malaysia as the national language and the third, to establish the education in human values.

The PPPM, besides targeting top 25 ranked universities by 2025, will also see the need for higher edu-

cation to be accessible locally to 2.5 million students annually from the current 1.4 million.

At another event later, Najib vowed not to bow to attempts to overthrow the government by discrediting it in the eyes of the world.

Before launching the new Yayasan Pewaris Batu building in Kuala Lumpur, the prime minister said the government was determined to allay the people's fears on national issues.

He said time was needed to find solutions to the economic situation, but this had been used against the government.

"These are matters beyond our control, which have resulted in the drop in value of the ringgit, but still, it is not yet as bad as it was during the 1997 Asian economic crisis."