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Human capital development a key prerequisite: Najib

A PERSON's economic, social and political gap with society will widen if he or she is denied the access to knowledge, Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak said yesterday.

"Knowledge is power. Through education, we can reduce this gap, eradicate poverty and improve our quality of life," he said in Petaling Jaya yesterday when receiving the LICT honorary fellowship award at the Lim Kok Wing Institute.

Najib is the first Honorary fellow recipient of the LICT which was awarded to him in recognition of his contribution in the education field.

Najib said Malaysia has reached a stage where "we need to put in place a world class education system in line with our vision of becoming a developed nation by the year 2020.

Najib said Malaysia, too, will have to ensure that its human capital are capable of meeting the challenges of the next century, and the education progress is instrumental in the creation of the right kind of human capital required to achieve the Government's aspirations of progress and prosperity.

In view of this, the Education Ministry has made systematic changes, both holistic and comprehensive, deemed necessary to the education system.

The ministry has tabled in Parliament five legislations related to education which, among others, provide greater power to the minister to make necessary changes to the education system.

It is not possible, he added, to carry out a reform of the education system without the Acts.

"Our educational system aims at producing a more innovative and creative generation to fit into the country's gradual slide into a technological world.

"For Malaysia to compete successfully in the international market, the development of its human capital in terms of quality and quantity is an important prerequisite.

"The process of teaching has to be restructured to fit new skills requirements, and certain areas of training has to be intensified and expanded such as information technology if we are to remain in the market place."

Najib also said Malaysia, in the 21st century, is determined not to be just a consumer of education but a producer and contributor to education and support the scientific and technological civilisation of the future.

The minister also witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Commonwealth Institute represented by its director Mokhzani Mahathir and the Middlesex University represented by Professor Michael Driscoll.

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