

29/09/1999

Computers for all schools likely by 2005

Chok Suat Ling

SABAK BERNAM, Tues. - The Government has equipped 575 primary and secondary schools nationwide with computers, and is working on providing all schools with computers by 2005.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said if this was achieved, the 4.9 million students in the country would be able to use computers to enhance their learning capabilities.

He added that this year alone, a RM17.5 million allocation had made it possible to equip 110 secondary and 222 primary schools in the country with computers.

Under the ministry's Computer in Education programme, each school is given 10 computers. Priority is given to rural schools.

Najib said since the programme's launch in 1992, 257 primary and 318 secondary schools in the country had benefited.

The number of schools which have received computers in each State are 62 in Perak, 61 in Selangor, 42 in Pahang, 35 in Kelantan, 56 in Johor, 44 in Kedah, 22 in Malacca, 34 in Negri Sembilan, 24 in Penang, 10 in Perlis, 28 in Terengganu, 29 in the Federal Territory, 59 in Sabah and 69 in Sarawak.

Sixty per cent of the schools which received computers are in rural areas.

Najib said: "The objective of the programme, which complements the Smart School project, is to ensure all students, especially those in rural schools, and teachers are computer-literate.

"From their progress thus far, we can safely say that the programme has succeeded in achieving its objective," Najib told reporters after presenting the first batch of computers this year to Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra here.

There are currently 8,731 schools in the country - 7,152 primary, 1,417 secondary, 39 fully-residential, 74 technical and vocational, and 49 religious secondary schools.

Najib said since the launch of the Computer in Education programme, progress had been "slightly slow", especially during the country's economic downturn.

"During the height of the downturn, allocation for the programme was withdrawn. But now that we have recovered, the pace will pick up."

Najib said courseware prepared for Smart Schools by the ministry was not ready yet.

"But once it is ready, it will be distributed in phases to schools within a period of three years.

"Schools are currently using courseware prepared by the Technology Education Division and others bought in the open market."

Later, during the Press conference Najib, who is also Umno vice-president, when asked to comment on advice by foreign parties for Malaysia to lift its selective capital controls, said the country should not be compelled to do so.

"What is important is that we have succeeded and the international community should accept that."

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had told US businessmen and community leaders in New York yesterday that Malaysia was not about to lift the selective capital controls despite being advised to do so.

(END)