

Guan Eng: Transformation plan fails to stem brain drain
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DAP today labelled Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's transformation programme to reverse Malaysia's brain drain a failure, pointing at the departure of another high-powered corporate figure to neighbouring Singapore.

"If even an iconic corporate leader like former Petronas CEO Hassan Marican is forced to depart to Singapore, where his talents are not ignored, the Najib government's transformation programme to attract human talents is a failure," its general-secretary Lim Guan Eng said in a statement.

Lim, who is also the Penang chief minister, also pointed out that Hassan (left) has joined the growing number of nearly two million Malaysians who have left since Merdeka to live and work overseas.

"This is extremely sad, especially when Hassan is widely credited as the man who turned Petronas into the leading international oil and gas company that it is today."

He lamented that talent such as Hassan Marican does not come by every day, and called on the government to take immediate measures to plug this leak in order to retain such talent or risk losing him and many more like him to overseas countries.

Lim quoted World Bank senior economist Philip Schellekens who warned Malaysia last year that the brain drain situation is likely to intensify, further eroding the country's already narrow skills base.

"Clearly, so long as political know-who supersedes technical know-how, negotiated deals are preferred to open tenders and there is neither full accountability nor transparency, Malaysia is fighting a losing battle to stem the brain drain," warned Lim.

He was commenting on media reports that the former Petronas chief executive officer is set to be appointed chairperson of Singapore Power Limited (SP) in June, succeeding Ng Kee Choe who is retiring.

After leaving the national petroleum company in 2010 due to alleged friction with the current political administration, Hassan has since been courted by prestigious foreign firms such as US oil and gas giant Conoco Philips, prior to being offered the top post in SP.

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