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PM okays mental literacy plan

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KUALA LUMPUR: To evolve from “an education system that merely spoonfeeds students to one that produces analytical and thinking students”, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has personally approved a mental literacy programme as a pilot project in selected schools.

The programme, focused on developing superior brain skills in students, embodied the government’s goal of raising the quality of the country’s education system through the creation of a more stimulating learning environment, said Abdullah.

Introduced to Abdullah by the chairman of the Malaysia Mental Literacy Movement (MMLM) and Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (Utar) Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik, the mental literacy programme focuses on training the mind in areas such as memory and mind-mapping, creativity, whole brain learning, thinking skills, personality profiling and emotional intelligence.

Another plus point for the programme, as stressed by Abdullah, was that it was in line with the government’s aim of developing quality human capital.

“A healthy, agile and active mind is the key to high quality human capital that will propel our nation forward to an even higher level of competitiveness and prosperity,” he said at the launch of the inaugural Malaysia Festival of the Mind 2007 at Utar.

As such, the prime minister said that he was very excited when he heard of the idea of introducing

the programme in schools from Dr Ling.

“I asked many questions and liked the idea. Hence I agreed to be patron of MMLM,” he said.

Abdullah said that the mental literacy programme should be introduced to schools not only in urban zones but also in the rural areas.

“Schools of all mediums should be involved to improve the quality of the performance of all schoolchildren.”

Abdullah also said that it was time Malaysians become not only creators of technology and innovation, but also pioneers of new and creative ways to use existing technology.

“This is something we are capable of achieving.

“For far too long, we have been mere users of imported technology and innovation.

“I have been talking about this for a long time.”

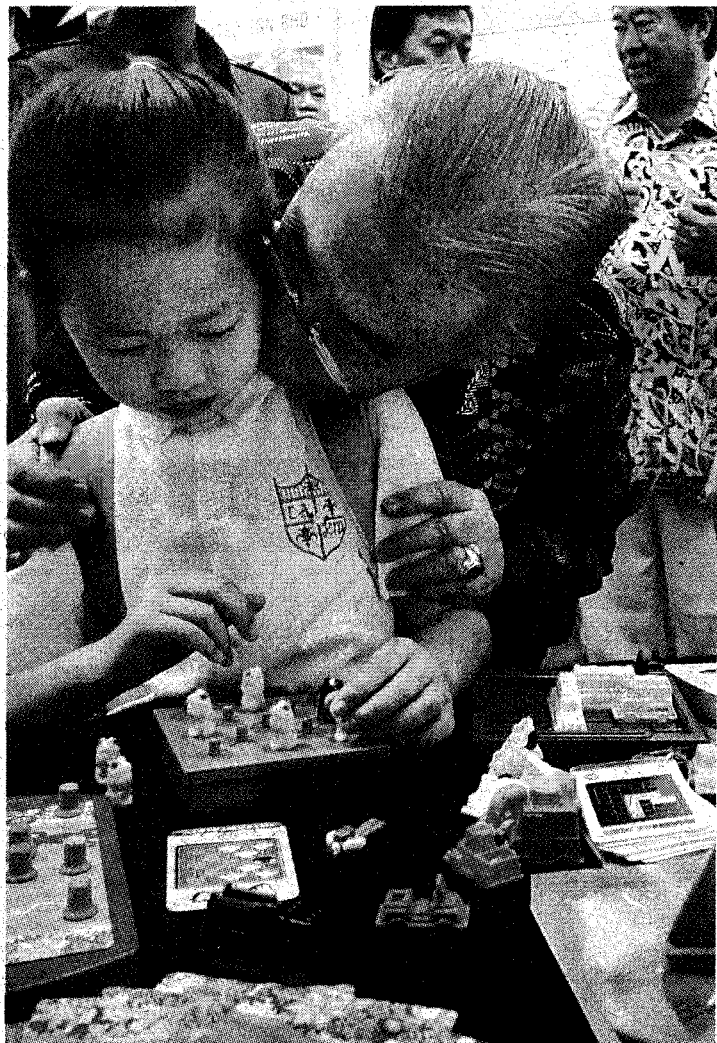
Abdullah said that although the government was committed to making the necessary, though difficult, changes to the education system, it could only achieve so much without the active support of all sectors of society.

“This support is crucial if we are to succeed in producing quality human capital capable of thriving in the knowledge-economy.”

This was why the work undertaken by organisations such as the MMLM was so vital, he said.

Within a year and half of its existence, the MMLM is playing an active role in creating awareness and interest among Malaysians of the need to develop thinking, memory and creative skills.

Abdullah also encouraged the



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi kisses Yap Sue Jiun, 6, as she gives a demonstration of the game 'hoppers' (a game like draughts, but using frog figurines) which can train students in critical thinking, after launching the Mind Festival sponsored by the Malaysia Mental Literacy Movement in Petaling Jaya yesterday. — Bernama picture

public to take part in the activities of the four-day festival of the mind.

“It is one way to get them to think out of the box.

“This is also another thing I have always been encouraging.

“Malaysians are very good at memorising.

“We can sing Bollywood songs without understanding what it means.

“Malays can memorise the Quran to the point of winning international competitions without understanding what it means.”

The MMLM was established as a platform to create awareness of mental literacy and multiple intel-

ligence among Malaysians.

Dr Ling, in his speech, said the skills produced by the programme were required by everyone at the workplace and for day-to-day living, allowing people to adapt and face new challenges intelligently and creatively.

Dr Ling also said Abdullah had given him permission to work with Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein to carry out the pilot project in selected schools and train students to develop superior brain skills.

“It is eventually hoped that the programme can be extended to all schools nationwide,” Dr Ling added.