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# Stay relevant, PM tells Kemas

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**TEACH AND NURTURE:** Dept educators urged to be 'substitute parents' to kids

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**P**RIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak wants the Community Development Department (Kemas) to stay relevant in line with the nation's development.

He said it was important for Kemas officers and staff to remain dedicated to community development.

"Kemas educators and staff are one of the main strengths of what the government is now," he said at the Kemas 55th Annual Prime Assembly in conjunction with Teachers Day here yesterday.

Najib said 1,263 Kemas supervisors would be promoted, adding that 920 field supervisors in Grade S17 would be promoted to Grade S22.

Promotions included 164 Kemas preschool supervisors who will be upgraded from S17 to S27; 178 senior supervisors from S22 to S27; and a Kemas state chief senior supervisor from S27 to S32.

Najib said he wanted Kemas educators to play the role of substitute

parents to children they were responsible for.

"Teach and nurture them as if they are your own children because they are the country's future."

Kemas has 18,000 staff catering to more than 230,000 children.

Najib said Malaysia had among the highest adult literacy rates in the world, with only 0.6 per cent of adults who were illiterate, compared with 49.3 per cent when the first programme to eradicate illiteracy was introduced in 1961 by former prime minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein.

About 5,000 Kemas staff attended the assembly yesterday. They handed over a petition of 12,000 signatures to show their support for the prime minister and the Barisan National government.

Present was Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

"More signatures will be handed to the prime minister when Kemas staff in Sabah and Sarawak sign the declaration of support," Ismail Sabri said, adding that Kemas was up-



Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** with **Kemas officers and staff** during the Kemas 55th Annual Prime Assembly in conjunction with Teachers Day in Serdang, yesterday. On his left is Rural and Regional Development Minister **Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob**. Pic by Asyraf Hamzah

grading its infrastructure.

"Kemas preschools are getting a facelift while Kemas facilities used in community development, such as classrooms for sewing and other

skills, are also being upgraded."

The Kemas preschool syllabus would be changed to focus on building confidence in children in communicating in English.

Kemas, founded in 1970, has 11,190 preschool classes and 490 Permata Kemas kindergartens offering early childhood education to 230,000 children.