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PRIME NEWS

'UiTM boon to Malays'

SOCIAL MOBILITY: The 60-year-old brainchild of Tun Abdul Razak has produced 661,456 graduates, says Najib

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UNIVERSITI Teknologi Mara (UiTM) has helped change the country's socio-economic landscape and improved the well-being of Malays and Bumiputeras.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the university had contributed immensely to the nation's development, having produced 661,456 graduates.

"UiTM was born through Umno's struggles.

"We cannot deny the fact that UiTM is the backbone of Malays and Bumiputeras," he said, adding that as Umno president, he had always spoken about the institution's significance during the party's assemblies.

"The birth of UiTM is something very dear to my family because it was founded by my late father, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, who envisioned this sacred university as a step in producing intellectuals from among Malays and Bumiputeras."

Najib said during his tenure as education minister, he had presented the Mara Act 1999, which had led to the transformation of the institute to a university.

He said the second step he took after the transformation was setting an enrolment target of 200,000 students.

"Following the transformation, many additional campuses have been built and now there are 34 UiTM campuses nationwide.

"I have also been made to understand that the 200,000 enrolment target could be achieved within the

next four to five years," said Najib at the launch of UiTM's 60th anniversary celebration here yesterday.

Najib said the establishment of the institution impacted significantly on the four objectives in a university framework — education, access to quality education, social mobility and social equality.

He said access to education was one of the benchmarks of a developed country and UiTM had contributed significantly in this respect.

"The sons and daughters of farmers and fishermen, in just one generation, have become professors, ministers and chief executive officers," he said, adding that UiTM was among the biggest contributors to graduate marketability.

"I have visited many countries and Malaysia is among the best in the world in terms of social mobility.

"UiTM has also contributed to national social mobility and social equality which have particularly seen the ability of the Malay and Bumiputera communities to come out of poverty, aside from building a just society regardless of race," he said, adding that access to quality higher education was an important yardstick for a developing country in nurturing successful citizens.

Najib also gave his assurance that the government would continue to support UiTM's development together with Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh.

Present were Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Nancy Shukri and UiTM Vice-Chancellor Professor Emeritus Datuk Hassan Said.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak with UiTM students at Dewan Agung Tuanku Canselor in Universiti Teknologi Mara, Shah Alam, yesterday. Pic by Intan Nur Elliana Zakaria