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# PM: Brush up on languages

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Proficiency in English and Mandarin will take us far, says Najib



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**KUCHING:** Malaysians must be proficient in several languages, particularly English and Mandarin, to keep abreast with globalisation and connect with emerging economies, says the Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said while proficiency in English – being the lingua franca of world – was increasingly important, learning Mandarin would strengthen ties with China that had emerged as a global economic superpower.

At the same time, he reminded Malaysians not to abandon Bahasa Malaysia as it was an important tool to promote national integration.

“Today’s world is different. It is a world where one needs to be connected with the rest of the globe. To communicate, we have to be proficient in several languages.

“English is increasingly important and we also need to be proficient in Mandarin so that we can communicate with China, a country that will emerge as the largest economy in the world. It is just a matter of when, not if.

“Proficiency in Bahasa Malaysia will help us carry our national identity,” Najib said when launching the new school block for SJK(C) Chung Hua No. 4 here yesterday.

Constructed at a cost of RM4.6mil, the building comprises eight classrooms, offices, a multipurpose hall and canteen.

The Government, said Najib, would continue to support the growth of Chinese education in the country, adding that it was the Government’s liberal policy towards education since Independence.

“When I took over office as Prime Minister, there was a shortage of teachers in Chinese schools. I called for a meeting and soon enough, the problem was addressed.

“I also embarked on supporting the National Education Blueprint, making sure that Chinese schools are here to stay and continue to serve the nation,” he added.

Najib, whose son Norashman speaks fluent Mandarin, said the opening of the Xiamen University in Kuala Lumpur last year – the



**Support for education:** Najib signing a plaque following the launching of the new school block at SJK(C) Chung Hua No. 4 in Kuching while Abang Johari (second from left) and Dr Sim (right) look on. — Bernama



varsity’s first overseas campus approved by the Chinese government – was further testimony of the Government’s commitment to providing quality education.

“We must also continue to focus on character building to produce human capital that is successful and imbued with the right values,” he said.

The National Transformation 2050 (TN50) roadmap, said Najib, was introduced to turn Malaysia into one of the world’s top 20 nations in 30 years.

Touching on the school’s new building, which was completed in four months and

ahead of schedule, Najib said it was made possible due to strong collaboration between the community, the state and federal governments.

The federal government set aside RM1.5mil for the project, which was complemented with RM800,000 from the state. The developer also donated RM1.33mil for the construction while the rest was raised by the public.

Chief Minister Datuk Amar Abang Johari Tun Openg said the Sarawak government would continue with the policy introduced by his predecessor on Chinese education, including the recognition of the Unified Examination Certificate.

Abang Johari said the state would continue to provide annual funding to Chinese schools in Sarawak, saying that this year’s budget had been raised to RM6mil.

At the event, Najib also presented a cheque for RM250,000 to another school, Chung Hua Middle School No. 4.

Local Government Minister Datuk Dr Sim Kui Hian was also present at the launch.