

Najib Praises Chinese Role, Contribution In Improving Education In Malaysia
Bernama
September 25, 2011

GEORGE TOWN, Sept 25 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today he took great pride in the role and contribution of the Chinese in Malaysia towards the betterment of education in the country.

He said it was for this reason that the government supported and gave assistance to the Chinese schools since independence.

Najib said that when he was the education minister, he took bold steps to remove the power of the education minister to convert national type schools into national schools and that one of the most positive outcomes of this change was the widening of diversity in the Malaysian schooling system.

"Chinese national-type schools have now attracted almost 56,000 bumiputera students out of the 612,000 students overall. Today, more Malays speak Mandarin than ever before - part of transforming Malaysia to help give us the vital business edge in years to come, as China consolidates its economic power.

"My own son is studying Mandarin at Georgetown University (in the United States). Last year, I sent him to Beijing for a month to learn Mandarin. Now, he thanks me for that," he said at the launch of the "1Malaysia Charity Ride for Education" at the Penang Straits Quay in Tanjung Tokong, here.

Also present were Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

Najib said his late father and second Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein took an important step to build a good relationship with China and he (Najib himself) was continuing that effort.

"We need more Malaysians, from every background and heritage, to win business for us with China and, therefore, we need more Mandarin speakers to help us to explore new frontiers in our dealings with China as a global economic superpower," he said.

He said the Malaysian Chinese community was well known for the values of industriousness, hard work and thriftiness "and today we need to add selflessness and dedication to learning".

"I am reminded of the Chinese saying, 'no matter how poor we are, we will not compromise on education'," he said.

Najib said the government would continue to focus on education as part of the programme to develop the country.

He said the future of Malaysia depended on all Malaysians, especially youngsters, and that a better future could be built for the country and all Malaysians through education.

"Through education, we can overcome all obstacles. We can have greater prosperity for all Malaysians. Education is the medium that we should look at together.

"Whether it is a Chinese school or an Indian school or an Islamic religious school, we need to help our children to succeed. I believe in education as an asset and investment," he said.

The prime minister said that apart from China, Malaysia also needed to build a good relationship with India and the Middle Eastern and Western countries, and this he added could be done through education.

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