

Najib administration to push for more competition in services

The Malaysian Insider

July 05, 2011

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 5 — The Najib administration is looking at liberalising the education, healthcare and professional services sector as well as introducing programmes to promote competition said Pemandu today.

The liberalisation efforts are part of the International Standards and Liberalisation strategic reform initiative (SRI) launched here today.

Pemandu said that the recommendations for the health care sector include removing foreign equity restrictions for private hospitals and the relaxation of restrictions for foreign specialists.

For the education sector, recommendations include relaxation of foreign equity for international schools.

Recommended actions for professional services include no foreign equity restrictions for accounting firms, allowing foreign lawyers and legal firms to practice in Malaysia via international joint law partnerships, limiting the liability of engineers to 15 years and easing the entry of foreign architects.

Pemandu also noted that Malaysia has 6,260 standards but less than 10 per cent are adhered to and enforced.

The think tank said that it could not review all standards at one go and decided to focus on five initial areas - seaweed, medical devices, green lable products, halal pharmaceuticals and pineapples.

Recommendations for programmes to implement competition law by 2012 include effective advocacy and a solid structure of a competition commission.

The International Standards and Liberalisation SRI is one of six SRIs that were derived from the recommendations of the National Economic Advisory Council (NEAC).

The other SRIs are Government's Role In Business, Public Finance, Human Capital Development, Public Service Delivery and Narrowing Disparities/Bumi SMEs.

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