

**Community Colleges Key To Producing Skilled Manpower - Muhyiddin  
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SEGAMAT, March 3 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today the country's community colleges are key to making available skilled manpower to help boost the economy.

As such, these colleges which have close links to the local community should make available manpower in line with the government's comprehensive policy on lifelong learning, he said.

"The National Lifelong Learning Master Plan 2011-2020 was launched on Nov 14 last year with the objective of making lifelong learning one way for Malaysians to equip themselves with knowledge and skills.

"In this context, community colleges have been entrusted with the responsibility of being lifelong learning hubs and implement skills-oriented programmes such as apprenticeship training for people without a strong academic background," he said.

Muhyiddin spoke at the opening of the Segamat 2 Community College and the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Higher Education Ministry and the Ex-servicemen's Affairs Corporation (Perhebat), here. Also present were Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin and Human Resource Minister and Segamat MP Datuk Dr S. Subramaniam.

The deputy prime minister said there is a most critical need to generate skillful and productive jobs, without which the country faced the risk of declining in terms of status.

He said that in keeping with the community college motto of "Driving a Knowledgeable and Skillful Community", the local community should grab the opportunity provided by the government to enhance their education.

"The system of education must progress to a higher level and be able to produce highly skilled and competitive human capital. This calls for close cooperation among the interest groups such as industry, academicians, parents and non-governmental organisations.

"This is important to ensure sufficient supply of skilled manpower and minimise dependence on foreign labour as well as indirectly raise the income of the people," he said.

On the MoU, Muhyiddin said it is a proactive measure by both the ministry and Perhebat to enable the community college serve as the main training centre for retiring soldiers.

Muhyiddin said productive cooperation between community colleges and the private sector will not only facilitate flow of knowledge but also encourage development of networks for creation and dissemination of knowledge.

As such, he expressed the hope that more industries would make use of community colleges to train their workers.

At the event, Muhyiddin announced several allocations for the benefit of the people of Segamat, which included RM6 million to build six classrooms of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Datuk Ahmad Arshad, RM4.5 million to build the Taman Yayasan mosque and RM4 million to put up a building to replace the classrooms of Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina Hua Nan.

Earlier, Mohamed Khaled said the government had set up 78 community colleges nationwide, 50 of them being main campuses and 28 branch campuses.

In Johor alone, he said, there are 12 of these colleges, seven of them being main campuses.

He also said that 211,884 people from the age of 15 to the elderly had attended short-term courses under the 1Malaysia Training Programme at these colleges last year.

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