

**Malaysia Only Country Outside China Recognising Chinese Education - Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 17 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is the only country outside China that recognises Chinese education as part of the national education system, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today.

Describing this as being of great significance, he said no other country in the region recognised Chinese education.

"We are the only country outside China which has got Chinese education as part of the national system. We have recognised Chinese education in Malaysia, and I think that is of huge, great significance.

"Please see that in that context, in that perspective, that we have recognised Chinese education as part of the national system," he said during an hour-long interview with deejays of Melody FM, Astro Radio's second Chinese radio station, here.

Najib was the guest on the station's breakfast show 'Melody FM Morning Boss' with host announcers Chui Ling and Jentzen Lim.

The prime minister was responding to a question from one of the deejays on the efforts taken by the United Chinese School Committees Association of Malaysia (UCSCAM), or better known as Dong Zong, pertaining to Chinese education.

Najib explained that when he was the education minister, he had removed Section 21(2) of the Education Act 1961 which allowed the minister to convert a national type primary school to a national primary school.

This, he said, indicated that the government was sincere in recognising Chinese education.

He also said that the government recognised the existence of the 60 Chinese independent schools.

"The rest of the schools are conforming schools. In other words, they take the national examination," he said.

Najib also said that the government had come up with a creative solution to a recent request from the Chinese community in Kuantan to have a Chinese school.

"We said, you can have the school, provided you take the SPM (examination) but if you want to take the Unified Examination Certificate (UEC), that is up to you.

"They decided to accept that offer. So, it will be a secondary school, the kids will have to take the SPM (examination) but they will take the UEC in addition to the SPM. So, that is a kind of a win-win situation," he said.

Answering questions from listeners, Najib said he had announced a RM100-million allocation for national type Chinese schools in the country in Budget 2013.

He also said that the top 50 students of Chinese independent secondary schools were given scholarships to pursue their tertiary education.

On the shortage of teachers in Chinese primary schools, Najib said the eight-point plan to address issues in Chinese vernacular schools was being implemented now.

"It is under the purview of the deputy minister of education and he is making sure that it will be implemented," he said.

Najib also said that vernacular schools, including Chinese schools, would be part of the exercise to improve the quality of education under the National Education Blueprint.

"I believe we don't have any kind of stigma. My own son, Ashman, speaks fluent Mandarin.

"I believe it is good for the Malays to learn Mandarin just as it is important for Malaysian Chinese to be fluent in Bahasa (Melayu) as Bahasa, of course, is our national language," he said.

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