

**PM: Multi-lingual skills will give us competitive edge**  
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MIRI: English, Mandarin and Bahasa Malaysia are considered part and parcel of our national identity, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

"It will be good if all of us in the country can speak and write in Bahasa Malaysia, English and Chinese all at once. This multi-lingual ability will give us a global competitive edge.

"These three languages are part of our national identity. If all Malaysians have this strong national identity, we will be able to compete with anyone on a global scale," he said in his speech when launching SJK (C) Chung Hua Tudan in the Kuala Baram district yesterday.

Najib said the Malaysian Government had always considered Chinese education as part of the national education system.

He was pleasantly surprised to find that the students and people living in the area had a good command of all three languages, including many bumiputras, adding that he wanted to see the same situation happening throughout the country.

"You have a Chinese school where 52% of the students are from the bumiputra communities. All of them can master all the three languages of Bahasa Malaysia, English and Chinese (Mandarin)," he added.

He said an annual allocation of about RM100mil, together with various additional financial grants, to Chinese schools for upgrading school infrastructure and facilities had been given for the past three years.

"We have a government that is very open. Outside of China and Taiwan, Malaysia is the only other country in the world that gives official recognition to Chinese education.

"This is even guaranteed under the Education Act 1969 and is also part of the education blueprint that we have drawn up for implementation," he said.

Najib said all these showed that the Barisan Nasional government had achieved much of its transformation agenda, adding that it could only be sustained and enhanced with continued peace and stability.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, in his speech earlier, said the Chinese in Sarawak had no intention to segregate themselves from other races, adding that they had always been playing a central role in promoting and enhancing racial and religious unity.

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