

PM Pledges Additional Allocation For UiTM To Build New College
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SHAH ALAM, May 1 (Bernama) -- Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) will be given an additional allocation to build a new college to enable it to double its intake to 10,000 students a year, said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak.

"This is a pledge that will be fulfilled," said the prime minister to a thunderous applause from a gathering of over 20,000 UiTM students and staff at the Destiny Child Nations Foundation (MDAB) programme at the UiTM Shah Alam campus here Wednesday night.

Najib said he was impressed with the role played by UiTM through the MDAB programme for this year 25,000 students from poor families were able to pursue higher studies.

"Just imagine, if these 25,000 people were not assisted by the MDAB, what will happen to them, hundreds of thousands of our children will be drifted away from the mainstream of the national progress forever," he said.

Najib said the MDAB had been working hard, traversing every nook and corner of the country, including Sabah and Sarawak, to offer places at UiTM to students from poor families to pursue their studies.

He described the MDAB as an example of the principle of social mobility which was difficult to be replicated in developing as well as developed countries like the United States where the cost higher learning was exorbitant.

"In a poor neighbourhood like Harlem, New York, only high school students who excelled in sports could get basketball, boxing or American football scholarships to enter universities.

"Without sport scholarships, they will remain in Harlem and face uncertain future with no hope to a new life," he added.

However, in Malaysia, young people from areas such as Kampung Bantal and Kampung Pagi in Hulu Tembeling, Pahang still had the opportunity to enrol in universities because of the government policy and an institution like UiTM existed.

"Maybe without UiTM they will face a bleak future, maybe they might not be able to change their poor upbringing, if their father is a rubber tapper, they might grow up as a rubber tapper," he said.

He said the government had elevated UiTM from Institut Teknologi MARA to a university when he was the minister of education and now it had become an institution which had served thousands of children and gave them the opportunity to create a secure future.

"I humbly beg you to continue the struggle. Even though we had done a lot, we have yet to reach our destination.

"I need a strong mandate this time. I am confident that BN is the most accurate choice.

"Do you want peace?, Do you want stability? Do you want progress? Do you want Najib?" to which the students answered "yes".

Earlier, Najib said he was encouraged by the rousing welcome accorded to him, but felt sorry because his voice had become hoarse for the political campaign had taken a toll on him.

"I should be talking loudly and firmly. But despite that, I'm still in high spirit after seeing you wearing T-shirts displaying 'peace, progress, stability'," he added.

The prime minister arrived to tremendous shouts of "PM PM PM" and a thunderous applause by UiTM students and staff at the UiTM parade ground.

Most of the students stood on their chairs to catch a glimpse of Najib and broke into applause each time his name was mentioned by the master of ceremony.

The gathering was witnessed by about 50,000 UiTM students and staff at its campuses throughout the country.

Present were the prime minister's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, UiTM vice-chancellor Datuk Seri Prof Sahol Hamid Abu Bakar and YDAB chief executive officer Mohd Aizzuddin Mohd Ghazali.

A total of 20,000 students had benefited from the MDAB programme, of which Najib is the patron, and the number is expected to reach 25,000 in the next intake.

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