

**Work Force Needs To Acquire New Skills - Najib
Bernama
May 17, 2014**

PEKAN, May 17 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the present work force needs to learn new skills besides upskilling and reskilling so that they would not be left out as the world progresses.

The Prime Minister said this was because the knowledge and skills acquired in the past were already obsolete as technology changed very rapidly.

"The national education system must also teach our children to fill up the new types of vocation which are still non-existent currently.

"That's the biggest challenge, how to prepare our children to take up vocations which are still non-existent, but will become a reality within the next 10 to 20 years," he said.

He disclosed this in his speech when opening the Pekan Community College costing RM12.3 million, in Pekan, Saturday.

The opening ceremony was also attended by Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob and Second Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh.

Najib said the people in this country must be equipped with knowledge and skills because they formed a source of strength and gave an advantage to the nation in the competitive era presently and in the future.

"As a nation that has great aspiration, we are investing in the field of education including mastering knowledge and skills from a young age right up to the concept of life-long education.

"We ensure that the rate of dropouts is negligible and if there are any, we make openings for our children to look for educational opportunities," Najib said.

The Prime Minister did not deny that there still existed skills gap in the country when what had been generated through the education system did not meet the market needs fully.

As such, Najib said, efforts must be made so that such gaps could be filled up as soon as possible.

He said the existence of the community colleges had to a certain extent overcome the problems where students who failed to pursue higher studies were given skills to fill up the labour market in the industrial sector.

The Prime Minister said general education without specific skills would result in the individuals failing to fill up the market needs.

Meanwhile, he said, the national economic growth of 6.2 per cent in the first quarter of this year was an extraordinary achievement.

"This means that we are on the right track although other countries are facing various problems, we are still capable of achieving a convincing economic growth rate.

"We must ensure that this momentum does not stop and the transformation momentum must be strengthened," he said.

At the event, Najib witnessed the exchange of memorandums of understanding between the Pekan Community College and six representatives from the automotive and tourism industries.

The companies concerned were Honda Malaysia, Hicom Automotif Manufacturer Sdn Bhd, BMW Authorised Dealer Ingress Auto Sdn Bhd, Berjaya Group, ASEAN Retail Chains & Franchise Federation, and Universiti Malaysia Pahang.

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