

Computational Thinking, Computer Science to Be Taught In School Next Year
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PUTRAJAYA, Aug 11 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today that starting January next year, Computational Thinking and Computer Science will be integrated into the country's formal school curriculum.

The Prime Minister, when announcing this, said they would be integrated into the new Standard Based Curriculum for Primary Schools (KSSR) and Standard Based Curriculum for Secondary Schools (KSSM) in phases.

"This effort will benefit approximately 1.2 million students from 10,173 schools nationwide," he said at the launch of #mydigitalmaker movement at Sekolah Sultan Alam Shah, Precinct 1 here today.

Najib said Computational Thinking and Computer Science would be integrated into all subjects for primary schools in phases starting with Standard One next year, Standard Two in 2018 and so on.

He said Basic Computer science would be offered to secondary schools, starting with Form 1 and Form 4 next year.

"What we are introducing is in fact something that is also being done in many other countries. This is a global phenomenon. US, UK and Australia have already integrated Computer Science education into their schools. I understand that Malaysia is the first country in ASEAN to have piloted this curriculum in our education system," he said.

Najib said the Education Ministry and Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) were working closely to prepare the educators for the new curriculum.

He said about 9,200 teachers were currently undergoing training on how to integrate computational thinking and computer science into their classrooms for the new curriculum next year.

"Computational Thinking and Computer Science is also being integrated into teacher training colleges and Institut Aminuddin Baki which trains principals and headmasters. In future, all teachers graduating from teacher training colleges will be equipped with these skills," he said.

Najib said the Computational Thinking and Computer Science curriculum was piloted in 24 schools last year, where 660 students and 50 teachers were involved.

He said in a short span of eight to 10 weeks of classes, these students were able to create their own games, presentations and other creations.

"I must take a moment to say Syabas and congratulations to the teachers of the pilot programme. You have done an amazing job in embracing this new skill and nurturing your students' interest and skills in such a short time," he said.

Meanwhile, Najib said it was vital to train the younger generation with Computational Thinking and coding languages that would give them a good foundation in preparing for future digital economy jobs.

He said jobs such as Data Scientists, Imagineers (engineers and multimedia experts), 3D Game Designer or User Interface (UI) Programmer and Solutions architect were just a few of the new and emerging job titles which are currently in demand.

"In fact, there are many jobs that probably today we have not heard of them but will become a reality by five to 10 years down the road. Therefore, we have to train our kids today for jobs that are not even existing," he said, adding that Malaysia recorded more than 88,107 jobs in Computer Science related fields last year.

Najib urged parents to encourage their children to embrace digital economy as career path because the earning potential in this field is huge.

Citing an example, Najib said an animation graduate from Multimedia University was earning more than RM25,000 per month while a female data scientist from Penang earned more than RM25,000 every month.

"Parents today must not want their kids to become doctors, lawyers or politicians. They should become scientists or jobs of the future economy. That is definitely much more exciting," he said.

On the launch of #mydigitalmaker, Najib said the movement, in partnership with Ministry of Education and the support of private sectors and academia, is an initiative to create a nation of digital makers.

He called upon all Malaysians to support the future generations in embracing digital innovation through the #mydigitalmaker movement that everyone must partake to see a

more solid digital economy for the country.

"I urge you to seize this opportunity, to be bold and confident - dream the important dreams and make them happen with digital technology. This digital economy that we speak of, will drive more innovation and growth of our nation - and you, as the future workforce, will be the drivers.

"The future begins now, and it begins with you. Challenge yourself, take chances, and turn your best ideas into action - because you can. Believe that and you will see that the future of digital innovators in Malaysia is a bright and rewarding one," he said.

Also present were Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid, Deputy Education Minister Datuk P.Kamalanathan, Education director-general Tan Sri Dr Khair Mohamad Yusof, Ministry of Communications and Multimedia secretary-general Datuk Seri Dr Sharifah Zarah Syed Ahmad and MDEC chief executive officer Datuk Yasmin Mahmood.

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