

PM: Emphasis on human capital

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NILAI: The national education system will be improved with a curriculum that takes into account the needs of society and the nation from a global context.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the transformation, including at the higher education levels, would emphasise quality and the importance of human capital towards nation building.

"Apart from the practical and theoretical aspects, every programme must contain specific components which help enhance an individual's moral values and self-confidence so that a graduate will be able to better adapt and succeed in his career.

"These components include the use of information technology, sound communication, creative thinking and entrepreneurial skills," he said at the opening of the Universiti Sains Islam

Malaysia (USIM) campus here, yesterday.

Abdullah said the government was also encouraging local institutions of higher learning to introduce more double-major or major-minor programmes to give added value to the present programmes being offered, especially those which were deemed less competitive.

He said the setting up of USIM was in line with the government's commitment in ensuring everyone had access to a sound education in the country.

"At present more than 4,000 students, mostly from religious schools are pursuing their higher education at USIM.

"Prior to the establishment of USIM, a large number of these students had to continue their studies abroad, especially in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria," he said, adding that USIM was a major asset in helping the country become a hub of higher learning.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled

Nordin, who also spoke, said USIM was among the universities vying to attain apex university status.

He said many of the programmes at USIM were conducted in English and Arabic and this had helped to attract many foreign students, making USIM a choice destination for higher learning.

"Apart from working to increase their programmes and faculties, higher learning institutions in the country must also constantly take into account the present and future market needs.

"In this context, I am proud of USIM's efforts in structuring their programmes and curriculum in line with the needs of society and the employment market."

He added that the success of a higher learning institution was also often determined by sound infrastructure and the move by USIM to set up its campus in Bandar Baru Nilai would have a positive impact on the future growth of the university.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (centre) receiving a mock cheque for RM3 million, being a personal contribution from Open University Malaysia's Pro-Chancellor and AmCorp Group Berhad executive chairman Tan Sri Azman Hashim. With them are Abdullah's wife, Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah (second from right), who is the university's Chancellor, and Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Khaled Nordin (left) and the university's Vice-Chancellor Prof Tan Sri Anuar Ali.