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Najib: Govt desires to see more Sabahans heading fed depts

SEPANGGAR: It is the government's hope to see more Sabahans heading federal departments in the State, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

In fact, Najib said, it is his hope to see more officers from Sabah holding important government positions not just in their home State but in other states as well.

"We indeed want this to happen. Already I was told by Tan Sri Sidek Hassan (Chief Secretary to the Federal government) that 37 of the 80 Federal department heads in Sabah now are Sabahans," he said when launching the Intan Sabah Campus here, yesterday.

Najib also hoped that various measures could be taken such as posting officers from depart-

ments in Sabah to other states in the peninsula and Sarawak to create a larger pool of experienced civil servants in Sabah when they returned.

In this regard, he said civil servants in Sabah should be willing to be transferred to other states and be prepared to seize any opportunity given to them to improve their skills.

"We certainly hope to encourage more Sabahans to take up posts in Federal departments as this will also enhance national integration, apart from helping to create a more competitive and reliable civil service," he said.

On Wednesday, Information, Communications & Culture Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim expressed support for the call by State leaders to consider

qualified Sabahans for top positions in Federal departments, saying it was logical and should be given attention.

Dr Rais also said the move was in line with the Federal government's commitment in the 20-Point Agreement which was concluded with Sabah during the formation of Malaysia.

Earlier in his speech, Najib said a modern and efficient public service that was guided by the needs and interests of the public has been one of the most crucial factors in enabling the country to develop and progress to where it is today.

"A reliable and competitive public service has enabled the country to transform its economy from agriculture-based to one that is propelled by industrial activities," he added.

And, he also said this vital component has remained a deciding factor and pivotal in driving the next phase of transformation - to become a developed country and a high income economy.

As such, the Prime Minister said the public sector must adapt to the fast changing environment by becoming more innovative, creative, flexible and proactive.

"When a new objective is set, the conventional response is to ask if more positions can be created or more budgets can be given. But the public service must move from this conventional approach."

"The right things to ask should be how we can make the right adjustment so that we can utilise more of the resources we

have to strategically and accurately achieve the objectives that need to be given priority while at the same time reduce the resources for the less important objectives.

"And, we must also ensure that with limited resources we can maximise our effort and outcome," he said.

Touching on the setting up of Intan Sabah, he said the institution would play a crucial role in creating a competitive civil workforce not only in the State but in the country in general.

He expressed hope that Intan Sabah would emerge as a premier institution that would serve as a reference not only at the national but also international level.

Built on an 80-acre land, the

campus costing RM120 million began construction in 2003 and was fully completed last year, providing state-of-the-art facilities that can comfortably accommodate 250 participants at any one time.

Including the latest campus in Sabah, Intan presently have six campuses nationwide, one in Sarawak and four in the Peninsula.

Also present at the launch yesterday were Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Haji Aman and his deputy Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan, Public Service Department director-general Dato' Sri Abu Bakar Abdullah, State Secretary Datuk Sukarti Wakiman, Federal Secretary to Sabah Dato' Muhammad Hatta Ab Aziz and Intan director Dr Aminuddin Hashim.