

# Najib: Knowledge will keep us independent

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**PUTRAJAYA:** Youth must not take the country's success for granted and should equip themselves with knowledge to face future challenges.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said knowledge was the key to preserving the country's independence and progress attained after 50 years of independence.

"To preserve our independence, the most important preparation is to sharpen our minds. Our strongest armour and weapon is knowledge. It holds the key to innovation, effective diplomacy, successful economic planning and

execution, and to the successful construction of a workable and sustainable social structure," he added.

Najib said this at the close of the REAL Undergraduate Conference 2008, organised by Puteri Umno, yesterday.

His speech was read by his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor.

The conference's theme is "Preserving independence for the future" which is one of the thrusts of Puteri Umno's campaign to train youth in leadership.

About 1,500 youth from 30 public and private universities attended the day-long conference where

they learnt about life concepts under the acronym REAL which stands for "relationship, equipping, attitude and leadership".

Najib said today's youth were able to lead comfortable lives and enjoy the fruits of success, thanks to the struggle of the country's past leaders.

He said all this could come apart in a moment because of threats to the country's independence, whether they were political, economic or social threats, or indirect threats through globalisation.

"It is not easy to achieve what we have today, to have a sustain-

able yet dynamic economy while protecting the harmony and national unity of a multiracial and multi-religious society.

"Success does not come by itself. It all comes from careful planning. Therefore, it is not right if we take all the comfort we enjoy for granted."

Other speakers at the conference were former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, artistes Datuk Siti Nurhalizia and Norman Hakim, Bank Negara director Koid Swee Lian, Petronas vice-president Datuk Aion Marziah Wahi and Malaysian astronaut Dr Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor.