

**KERATAN AKHBAR-AKHBAR TEMPATAN
TARIKH: 7 OKTOBER 2015 (RABU)**

Bil	Tajuk	Akhbar
1	PM: Streamline innovation bodies	New Straits Times
2	Agensi kerajaan terlibat inovasi disusun semula	Utusan Malaysia
3	MOSTI denies using dangerous chemicals in cloud seeding	Borneo Post Online
4	Malaysia targets RM9.5b GNI by 2020 via Internet of Things	New Straits Times
5	Pembenihan awan teknologi paling selamat	Utusan Malaysia
6	Sedia buat pembenihan awan setiap hari	Berita Harian
7	Cloud seeding done daily	The Star
8	Pembenihan awan teknologi paling selamat	Utusan Online
9	Cloud seeding done daily	The Star Online
10	Antara terawal perkenal langkah pencegahan	Harian Metro
11	Makin pulih tapi...	Harian Metro
12	Mujigae 'may reduce haze'	New Straits Times

PM: Streamline innovation bodies

PROPOSAL: Move to avoid duplication and ensure leaner structure, says Najib

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has proposed that some government agencies involved in the innovation sector be merged or streamlined to boost efficiency and avoid duplication.

Currently, he said, the government had a host of ministries and agencies in the sector, including the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry; Finance Ministry; Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry; Global Science Innovation Advisory Council; Economic Planning Unit; and Performance Management and Delivery Unit.

"At last count, government entities involved in innovation and technology include five departments under the Prime Minister's Department; three ministries with direct technology funding; six ministries with technology associations; three regulators; four councils that I chair; four other councils; three development corporations with funding; seven development agencies or corporations; one foundation; six research institutes; three industry associations; five mutual funds; five managed funds; and 11 funding agencies or bodies. This is a lot.

"With a myriad of entities with so many roles, there is a need for streamlining to avoid duplication.

"We need to amalgamate some agencies to have a leaner and more effective structure moving forward," he said when closing the 11th Khazanah Megatrends Forum here yesterday.



Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** with (from left) Khazanah Nasional deputy chairman **Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop**, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department **Datuk Seri Abdul Wahid Omar** and Khazanah Nasional managing director **Tan Sri Azman Mokhtar** during the launch of the 'Reflections on a Decade' book at the 11th Khazanah Megatrends Forum in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Pic by Asyraf Hamzah

He said the government would continue to be invested in guiding and facilitating a knowledge-driven economy, including prioritising Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, or STEM, and English language skills in education to cultivate future talent and develop a sustainable innovation ecosystem.

Najib said the need to have a good command of English was paramount despite the need to preserve the country's local identity, alluding to some quarters' resistance to improving their command of the language.

"In today's world, there are two forces working in opposite directions.

"The first is globalisation, which brings together people from all over

the world, while the second is a growing emphasis on local identity, where it is all about protecting one's own rules.

"This paradox is seen in countries, such as Spain and even Scotland, which, after many years, is asking for independence from the United Kingdom. This is a global phenomenon.

"Still, the need to be proficient in English is paramount. I feel we are not yet there. So, we need to push harder to enhance the level of (English) proficiency."

The government, he said, played a crucial role in innovation, having undertaken measures and policies to encourage the development of a knowledge-driven innovation economy.

Najib said these included the Multimedia Super Corridor, or MSC Malaysia, which has contributed more than RM275 billion in revenue and RM206 billion in investments, and created more than 147,000 jobs since its inception in 1996.

"These are the results that innovation-centred, government-driven initiatives can achieve."

Other initiatives include the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre and Agensi Inovasi Malaysia, which nurture entrepreneurial ambition and innovative thinking through the provision of education resources, platforms and networks.

Present were Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Abdul Wahid Omar, Khazanah Na-

sional managing director Tan Sri Azman Mokhtar and Khazanah Nasional deputy chairman Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop.

National Professors' Council political cluster head Professor Datuk Mustafa Ishak lauded Najib's proposal to streamline the agencies.

He echoed Najib's sentiment, saying redundancy was commonplace in the sector, with a number of agencies doing the same things.

He said the sector needed synergy, and to streamline key players' efforts, a lead agency should be appointed to ensure the agencies put their heads together towards achieving the national innovation agenda.

"Collaborative efforts are important so that resources are not wasted and expertise can be tapped."

KERATAN AKHBAR
UTUSAN MALAYSIA (DALAM NEGERI) : MUKA SURAT 5
TARIKH : 7 OKTOBER 2015 (RABU)

Agensi kerajaan terlibat inovasi disusun semula

KUALA LUMPUR 6 Okt. - Agensi-agensi kerajaan yang terlibat dalam bidang inovasi dan teknologi akan disusun semula bagi mengelakkan berlakunya masalah pertindihan bidang tugas serta birokrasi yang akhirnya merugikan negara.

Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak berkata, ketika ini agensi yang bertanggungjawab menerokai bidang tersebut dianggap terlalu banyak sehingga melebihi 60 entiti, termasuk lima daripadanya berada di bawah Jabatan Perdana Menteri.

“Dengan jumlah entiti yang banyak, wujud risiko ruang perpecahan yang perlu dihadapi kerajaan. Kita perlu tekankan mengenai jumlah agensi bagi menentukan yang mana satu benar-benar penting, sekali gus mengurangkan kerenah birokrasi.

“Kita perlu kepada penjurusan dan penggabungan beberapa agensi supaya tugas dapat dilaksanakan

dengan lancar dan efektif,” katanya ketika berucap merasmikan majlis penutup Forum Megatrends Khazanah 2015 di sini, hari ini.

Menurut Perdana Menteri, proses penyusunan semula itu perlu kerana penglibatan kerajaan merupakan antara elemen terpenting yang menentukan kejayaan dalam sektor inovasi di mana-mana negara, termasuklah di Amerika Syarikat.

Katanya, atas tanggungjawab serta kesedaran itu, kerajaan mengambil pelbagai langkah yang tepat dalam memandu pembangunan ekonomi negara berasaskan sektor inovasi antaranya menubuhkan Koridor Raya Multimedia Malaysia (MSC).

Dalam perkembangan yang sama, Najib turut menekankan betapa pentingnya untuk rakyat Malaysia menguasai bahasa Inggeris jika mahu bersaing dalam arena global khususnya membabitkan inovasi selaku pemacu utama kemajuan negara.

Mosti denies using dangerous chemicals in cloud seeding



Hazy view at 10am yesterday around the Petronas Twin Tower and surrounding areas with API readings at 99.— Bernama photo

KUALA LUMPUR: **The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (Mosti)** has denied using dangerous chemicals in cloud seeding as spread on the social media yesterday.

Its minister, **Datuk Madius Tangau** said the substance used was natrium chloride which is normal cooking salt.

"This salt is safe and does not have any side-effects on human health or the environment," he said in a statement yesterday.

He added that the contents and quantity of the salt used was the same in each cloud seeding operation carried out and there were no additional chemicals as went viral on social media.

"In any cloud seeding operation, as much as 200 kilogrammes of salt are dissolved in 1,500 litres of water in a tank with a volume of 1,800 litres before it is sprayed into the clouds," he said.

A message in English on the use of dangerous chemicals was spread on the WhatsApp application and said: "Friends from TUDM (RMAF) just called to alert that they are using strong chemicals to make rain. This might affect the skin. So please stay away from the rain these few days and if (one comes) in contact, rinse promptly."

Meanwhile, **Meteorological Department director-general Datuk Che Gayah Ismail** urged the public not to believe the false information or to spread it as it could cause confusion among the people about cloud seeding.

"Acid rain only occurs when pollutants in the haze react chemically with the rain," she told Bernama when asked to comment on the matter. She said cloud seeding was carried out at 2.30pm yesterday and focused on the Klang Valley area.

"Cloud seeding was carried out after taking into account the current cloud conditions, suitable and stable atmosphere and the humidity of the air in the area," she said. — Bernama

