

Cuepacs-PSD move to boost English

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PETALING JAYA: Cuepacs is liaising with the Public Services Department to come up with a campaign to enhance English language proficiency in the one million-strong civil service.

Cuepacs president Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam, said it was imperative that workers, especially those in the civil service, took up the challenge and improved their command of English.

"The proposal will outline various programmes that can be integrated into this campaign," he said in an interview.

Although both parties have yet to meet on the matter, Siva said he was confident that the campaign would take off as soon as the proposal was submitted to the Government.

Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC) president Datuk Zainal Rampak urged the Human Resources Ministry to enhance the English module in the current retraining programmes for unemployed graduates.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent revelation that 94% of unemployed graduates were Malays and that most of them were not gainfully employed because their de-

grees were not suitable for most job specifications was "food for thought."

"The number is huge and if they are not retrained in other skills and tutored to master English, then they will be left behind," he said.

He said it was crucial for workers to be proficient in English as most information disseminated in skills training in the information and communications technology (ICT) age was in this language.

Zainal said English was also a very important component for those attending international conferences and meetings where delegates came from all over the world and had to find a common medium to convey and understand ideas.

MTUC, he added, had always upheld the importance of English in the courses that it organised by having programmes conducted in two languages.

"Even our meetings are conducted in both languages," he said.

Zainal said he was "bewildered" by the reluctance among Malaysians to learn more than just the national language and mother tongue.

"In Europe, most people have to master English besides their own mother tongues to gain employment in corporations and agencies," he said.