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Determined Norisah gets her worker's award

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - The handicapped should be confident and strive to excel as their condition is not an obstacle to success, said Norisah Bahrom, who won the Tokoh Pekerja award today.

"They should take my successes as an example, and stand up and be counted," said Norisah, an assistant multimedia designer with Celcom Malaysia, who won the women's handicapped category.

"As they become more successful, their presence will be felt, and the country will take notice of them and build them more facilities."

Norisah, 28, received a trophy, plaque and RM2,000 from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the 13th Workers' Day gathering at Stadium Putra in Bukit Jalil today.

She attributed her success to her supportive family and Celcom for giving her a chance to pursue a career in multimedia design.

Norisah has been paralysed from waist down since she was 15.

She started work as a data-entry clerk for Celcom and continued with her studies at Cosmopoint Institute of Multimedia and IT in multimedia programming. She became assistant multimedia designer after completing her studies.

Blind school teacher Mohamed Ismail, 51, who received the Tokoh Pekerja Lelaki, said the award proved that he and others like him could become assets to the country.

"It is a recognition for us," said Mohamed, who has been teaching for 19 years in SM Ibrahim Fikri, Kuala Terengganu.

Mohamed was awarded the Pingat Jasa Kebaktian by the Sultan of Terengganu and the Tokoh Orang Kurang Upaya in 1995.

Mohamed said his students respected him, perhaps more so because of his handicap.

"Once I caught one of them taking a picture of me. He didn't believe me but I told him that I had heard the click of the camera's shutters.

"They have also realised that they can't fool me by switching places as I remember where they sit, and can hear them get up and move to another seat."

Panasonic Communications (M) Sdn Bhd managing director Shinichi Kikuchi, whose company won the Majikan Berdaya Saing award, said his company appreciated its workers and wanted them to be productive, knowledgeable and competitive.

Shinichi, who served in the Malaysian branch for more than 10 years, said the company practised an open management philosophy with its workers.

Others who received awards were TV3 Sdn Bhd senior producer Mazlin Nordin (Tokoh Pekerja Perempuan), and Infineon Technologies production senior executive officer Muhammad Nabil Vethivell Abdullah (Tokoh Pekerja laki).

The others were Secret Recipe Cakes and Cafe (Majikan Berdaya Saing), Elektrisola (Majikan Prihatin), Felde Cenderawasih (Ladang Bahagia), Police Administrative and Civil Staff Union (Kesatuan Sekerja Contoh), and Sabah Bank Union (Kesatuan Sekerja Contoh).