

PM warns of brains and bombs

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Malaysian graduates must be taught good moral values so they do not become villains who will destroy the nation, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak says.

"If they are clever but don't possess morals, they can use their intelligence to destroy this country.

"The most extreme example is someone highly educated using the knowledge to build bombs. (Therefore) it is not impossible," he said in a speech today.

Najib was speaking at the launch of the National Higher Education Blueprint 2015-2020 in Kuala Lumpur.

"This is why we want to develop positive values (in our graduates)."

He said the goal of higher education, in simple terms, was to develop world class talents who possess proper values.

Besides ensuring graduates don't turn out evil, the prime minister also wants public universities to generate more income instead of asking for more allocations.

"For example, in 2025, the government will contribute RM14 billion, while public universities must get (an additional) RM4 billion on their own.

"I don't think this will be too hard, some universities have 2,000 acre land banks... surely they can generate a few hundred million ringgit from them," he said.

Najib, who is also the finance minister, said besides monetising assets, public universities could also "squeeze" their alumni for endowments, and earn from research and development projects.

Earlier, Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin (left) said in his speech that under the new Higher Education Blueprint, the government would loosen its grip on public universities.

"The Education Ministry will shift from becoming a tight controller to a regulator and policy maker," he said.

Muhyiddin, in his capacity as education minister, said public universities would be given more autonomy via five-year performance contracts.

A summary on the blueprint elaborates that under the contracts, universities will risk

losing funding if they do not meet certain performance-based goals. Those that exceed targets will be given incentives.

Greater autonomy for the public universities is part of 10 shifts outlined in the 2015-2025 Higher Education Blueprint.

Other shifts include financial stability, globalised online learning and global prominence.

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