

'Students must be morally upright'

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PM: They should excel not only in studies

■ By Noor Adzman Baharuddin
news@nst.com.my

PERTH, Tues. — Malaysian students must not only excel in studies, they must also be morally upright, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

Stressing that students should acquire as much knowledge in their fields as possible, both for personal development and nation-building, the Prime Minister said: "You must not only excel in your studies but equally important, you must also be of good character.

"You will come back and hold important posts and be trusted to make important decisions for your organisations.

"If you are clever but dis-

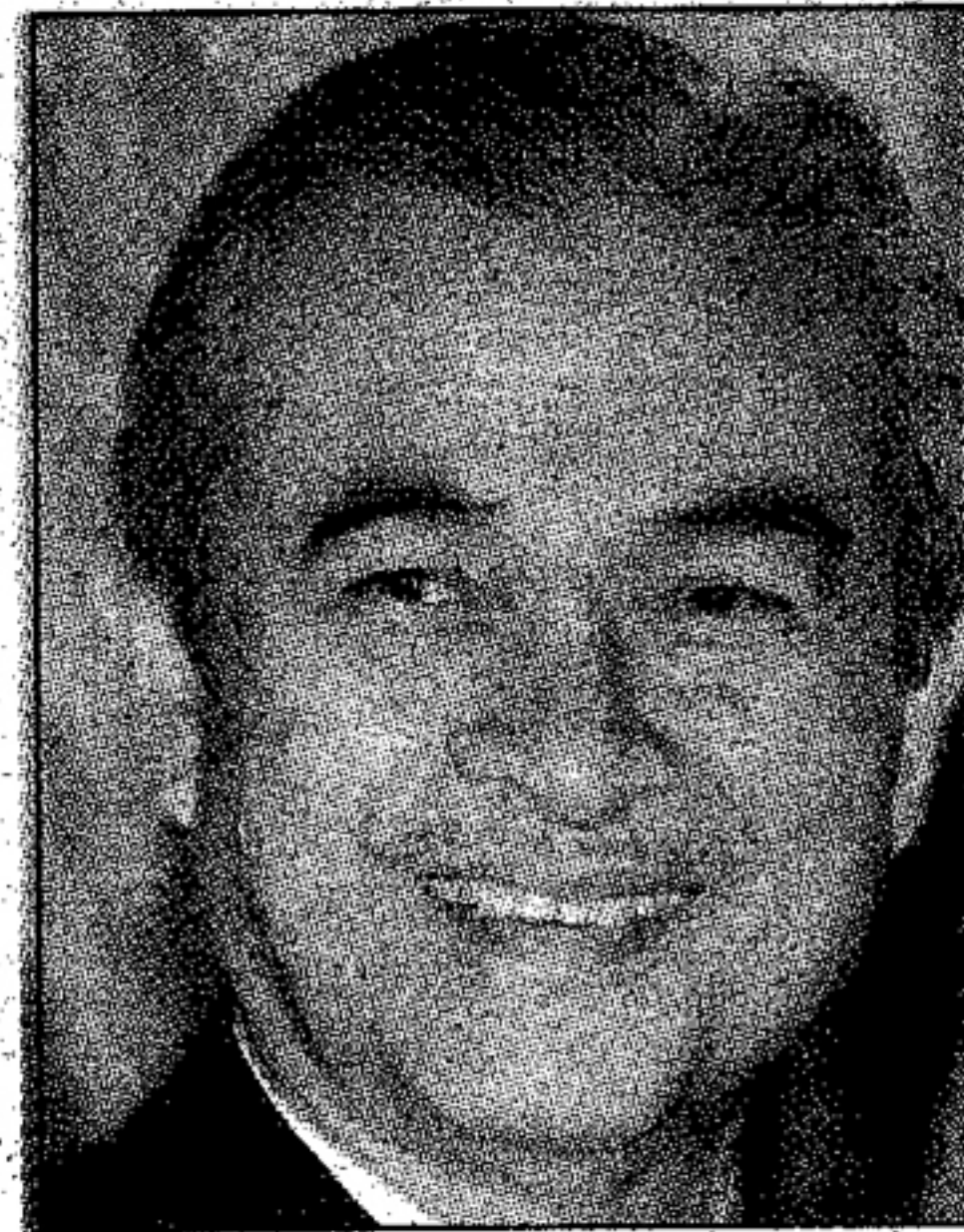
honest, that is no good and we do not want such people to run any organisation, either in the private sector or the civil service."

Abdullah was speaking at a dialogue here with more than 250 Malaysians studying at universities and colleges in Western Australia.

Also present was Malaysian High Commissioner to Australia Datuk Salim Hashim.

Among the VIPs accompanying the Prime Minister, who arrived today, were Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Mohd Rustam and Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Datuk Mohamad Hasan.

Abdullah is here to receive an honorary doctorate in tech-



ABDULLAH: Malaysians must try harder

nology from Curtin University of Technology at its main campus in Bentley tomorrow.

Abdullah said Malaysia was a rich country which required qualified managers with good character.

"Nobody can deny that we have done well, but we can still do a lot more to become an all-round developed nation by 2020."

He said Malaysians generally did not try hard enough and were not focused in their endeavours.

"It is not that we are incapable, but we just do not try hard enough, make extra effort or stay focused on whatever we do.

"If we find a lesson to be hard, we should try harder. If it is not enough, try even harder."

The Prime Minister, who addressed himself as "Pak Lah" throughout the session, reminded the students that nothing came easy.

He said the country was poised to achieve greater economic development as a result of successful research by local scientists in various fields, especially in developing alternative fuels from palm oil.

"I will table the Ninth Malaysia Plan in Parliament on March 31 and we have major plans to boost the lot of the people and carry out more development programmes, especially in the area of infrastructure which is lagging.

"I hope you can follow it live via the Internet since I know the Umno website will carry it."

Abdullah, who was in a jovial mood throughout the hour-long session, put the students at ease and had them in stitches on numerous occasions when responding to questions from the floor.

To a request from a government scholar that the student allowance be increased in view of rising costs in Australia, the Prime Minister said he had directed that the matter be looked into.

On steps taken to reduce unemployment among graduates, Abdullah said retraining programmes had proved successful, with as many as 80 per cent of the participants getting jobs upon completing the courses.