

# Explore other job options, grads told

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Graduates should not be too dependent on the government for employment.

Instead, they should explore other options such as the private sector or even the possibility of self-employment, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

"However, the private sector is very competitive and graduates need to equip themselves with the right skills, both hard and soft, to ensure that they are competent enough.

"Students should always be in tune with what is required by the job market.

"With the right skills, attitude and qualifications, they can find jobs anywhere," he said in his speech at the opening of the National Career Carnival 2006 held at the International Islamic University yesterday.

Najib said graduates could not be complacent and expect a job in the government sector upon completing their studies.

He urged them also to look into self-employment, a large domain "which we have not fully explored".

On this point, Najib said the government had already provided funds and grants for graduates who were interested in setting up their own businesses either locally or overseas.

"But this area has to be developed more and for that, graduates should not think in an orthodox or conventional way."

Touching on the unemployment problem faced by many local university graduates, Najib urged them to be proactive in improving themselves or risk being left behind.

He said the Cabinet had directed the Public Services De-

partment to expedite the process of filling the 32,000 vacancies in the public sector by offering the jobs to fresh graduates.

At a Press conference later, Najib said most varsity lecturers who lacked proficiency in English were those who were schooled in the Malay medium of instruction.

He said the problem arose as this generation of lecturers received their education in the national language in line with the government's policy back in the 1970s.

"We cannot expect them to be so fluent in English as that is not easy.

"Our efforts to increase proficiency in English will not happen overnight.

"This is a transition period we are going through and in the future, lecturers and teachers will be proficient enough in English to be able to teach in that language."

He added that enrichment programmes would be held for the current lecturers to improve their fluency levels.

Najib was commenting on a study conducted by the Higher Education Ministry, which found that the level of command among university students and lecturers had to be improved to produce gradu-

ates capable of meeting the challenges of a highly competitive global environment.

The National Career Carnival is a national-level programme that integrates all career-related services organised to help university and college leavers to identify suitable jobs, seek employment and successfully perform in the working world.

The three-day carnival will showcase a career exhibition by about 100 organisations, non-governmental organisations, local and international higher learning institutions as well as government agencies.