

Right attitude the key

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Degree alone not enough to ensure job, says Najib

KUALA LUMPUR: The right qualification alone will not guarantee graduates a job if they do not equip themselves with the right skills and attitude, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said.

Reminding undergraduates to equip themselves with the relevant soft skills to compete in the job market upon graduation, he said they must not be content with what they have but should strive for excellence.

"Having a degree today is not enough," he said in his keynote address when opening the National Career Carnival 2006 at the International Islamic University Malaysia's main campus in Gombak yesterday.

"If you are a doctor, don't just be a general practitioner, be a specialist; and do not just think of acquiring mere knowledge, but try to be the best.

"If you have the right qualifications, right skills and attitude, you will find jobs anywhere (including outside Malaysia)."

As a measure to tackle the high unemployment rate among graduates, Najib said, the Cabinet had directed the Public Services Department (PSD) to expedite the process of filling the 32,000 vacancies in the public sector.

However, he pointed out, this alone would not solve unemployment among graduates. He encouraged them to venture into the private sector or explore self-employment.

"They cannot depend on the Government for jobs; we must never have the notion or think that the Government or the country owes us a job," he said.

"This mindset has to change.

"The private sector is more competitive and you need to equip yourself not only with hard skills but also soft skills."

He also warned undergraduates that in this fast changing economic environment, employees need to constantly improve themselves with new skills or face the risk of being left behind.

On the issue of low English language proficiency among lecturers, Najib said the Government was doing all it could but it would take time to improve the overall standard.

"We must not forget that almost all the administrators, lecturers and professors were educated in the Malay medium," he said.

"This was a policy shift made in the 1970s so we cannot expect them to have the same level of proficiency as the generation before them who were educated in English."