

**Malaysian Professionals Underpaid, Says Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has conceded that Malaysian professionals are underpaid compared with their counterparts in foreign countries.

He said the state of affairs had somewhat deterred efforts to retain as well as attract good talents to work in this country.

"Although Malaysian professionals are competent, they are not being paid as well as those in other countries.

"I have been telling the private and public sectors to pay people salaries that commensurate with their skills and talents in accordance with international standards.

"So, it is my desire to see our wage rate move up steadily but with an eye on improving productivity as well," he said at the 11th Forbes Global CEO Conference here Tuesday night.

Najib said focused efforts were needed to retain good Malaysian professionals as well as attract Malaysian diaspora back with better remuneration as a pull factor.

Also important, he said, was to create opportunities, whereby the government had undertaken various measures under Economic Transformation Programme (ETP).

"I believe if we create opportunities, pay people well and push productivity, we will be able to attract more talents to work in Malaysia," he added.

On the removal of subsidies, Najib said, the government would be careful to ensure that it would not burden the people.

Najib cited some of the Arab countries which are in turmoil due to unemployment and rising cost of living.

"We are very cautious of the fact that rising cost of living is the responsibility of the government to deal with.

"Otherwise, in a political democracy, there will be a backlash against the government. So, we are committed to reducing subsidies gradually but we will have to ensure that there will be no additional burden for the people," he said.

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