

Malaysia to fill region's health professional gap

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1.2 MILLION JOBS: Bright future awaits our health sciences students, says DPM

KUALA LUMPUR: THE government will seek to expand education access in the health sciences field from 55,000 to 150,000 places in the next eight years.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said yesterday the move would help fill a shortage of 1.2 million health professionals in Southeast Asia, a number that is expected to grow to 1.8 million by 2020.

"I believe Malaysia can play a central role in answering the need for more health professionals in the region," he said when launching the new campus for the Pusrawi International College of Medical Sciences at Taman Batu Muda in Gombak, here.

He said the government had invested RM1.4 billion in the health sciences, which was expected to generate returns of RM2.8 billion in gross domestic product.

The health sciences field, one of the main clusters under the National Key Economic Areas for education, was expected to expand further in the future, he added.

"As such, health sciences students, who are considered highly skilled and employable, can expect a brighter future in this field," said Muhyiddin, who is also education minister.

Currently, he said, seven public institutions and 62 private institutions of higher education offered courses in the health sciences, with a total of 80,096 students.

Muhyiddin also said the government had recently completed the national public dialogue sessions, carried out as part of the ministry's education reform efforts.

"An initial report on the planned reforms will be published next month for feedback from the public before a final blueprint is produced."

Later, Muhyiddin attended Asar prayers at the Saidina Hamzah mosque in Kampung Batu before opening the Raudhatul Sakinah Kuala Lumpur-Karak cemetery here.

Administered by the Federal Territories Islamic Council, Raudhatul Sakinah is based on the "cemetery in a park" concept, and is part of a project to modernise the management of Muslim cemeteries.

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