

Najib Announces RM1 Billion Mara Education Fund To Finance Training Programmes For Youths
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SHAH ALAM, Sept 14 (Bernama) -- The Government today announced the establishment of a RM1 billion MARA Education Fund in the form of a "matching fund" to meet financial requirements for training programmes, education, entrepreneurship, research and development and innovation.

Announcing measures to empower Bumiputera Economy here today, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the fund will be channelled in stages, with a one-to-one ratio between the government and MARA.

He said the government will increase skills upgrading programmes for youths with low academic and skills qualifications to provide them a second chance so that they will have more opportunities to get a job.

This initiative is among the focus to develop Bumiputera human capital, he said.

Najib also said re-skilling programmes for Bumiputera youths will also be increased.

For the purpose, additional allocation will be given to MARA Activity Centres to buy latest technology to conduct the training programmes, said Najib, who is also the Finance Minister.

The prime minister said the number of programmes conducted by the national youth skills training institutes will also be increased by adopting the two-shift training session approach.

Realising that human capital was an important aspect in developing a community, the government has significantly positioned Bumiputera students in local and foreign tertiary learning institutions, he said.

"The next phase is to empower the Bumiputera human capital to match manpower and skills requirements to suit market needs," he said when addressing thousands of students, academics and businessmen at Universiti Teknologi MARA here.

On jobless Bumiputera graduates, Najib said the government will intensify training programmes to address the employability problem so that training programmes were compatible to industrial needs.

"For the purpose, programmes such as 1Malaysia Training Scheme, Graduate Employability Management Scheme and Skills Steering Programme will be expanded to increase the number of beneficiaries," he said.

To increase the number of highly-qualified Bumiputeras, Najib said the related agencies such as the Public Service Department and MARA will expand their post-graduate education programmes to meet market requirements particularly in critical and high technology disciplines.

He said the Professional Steering Programme under the Bumiputera Education Steering Foundation and similar programmes will be intensified in efforts to create more Bumiputera professionals.

"This will help them gain recognition as qualified professionals especially in critical fields such as to become accountants, specialist doctors, architects, engineers and actuaries," he said.

At the event, Najib also announced the government's plan to increase UiTM's student enrolment to 250,000 by 2020 from 180,000 currently.

"Plans are also afoot to open several UiTM branch campuses nationwide," he added.

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