

Civil service may be able to absorb 30,000 grads

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PUTRAJAYA: The number of unemployed graduates will be cut by half if they take on the 30,000 jobs now available in the civil service.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Najib Razak said yesterday there were 74,000 vacancies in the service, of which 30,000 were positions requiring a degree.

The Public Service Department and Public Services Commission would be told to expedite the hiring process as there were an estimated 60,000 graduates in different categories of unemployment, he added.

"If we can speed up recruitment, we can reduce the number of unemployed graduates, and also increase the efficiency of the civil service," Najib said at a Press conference after chairing the first meeting of a special committee formed to address the problem of unemployed graduates.

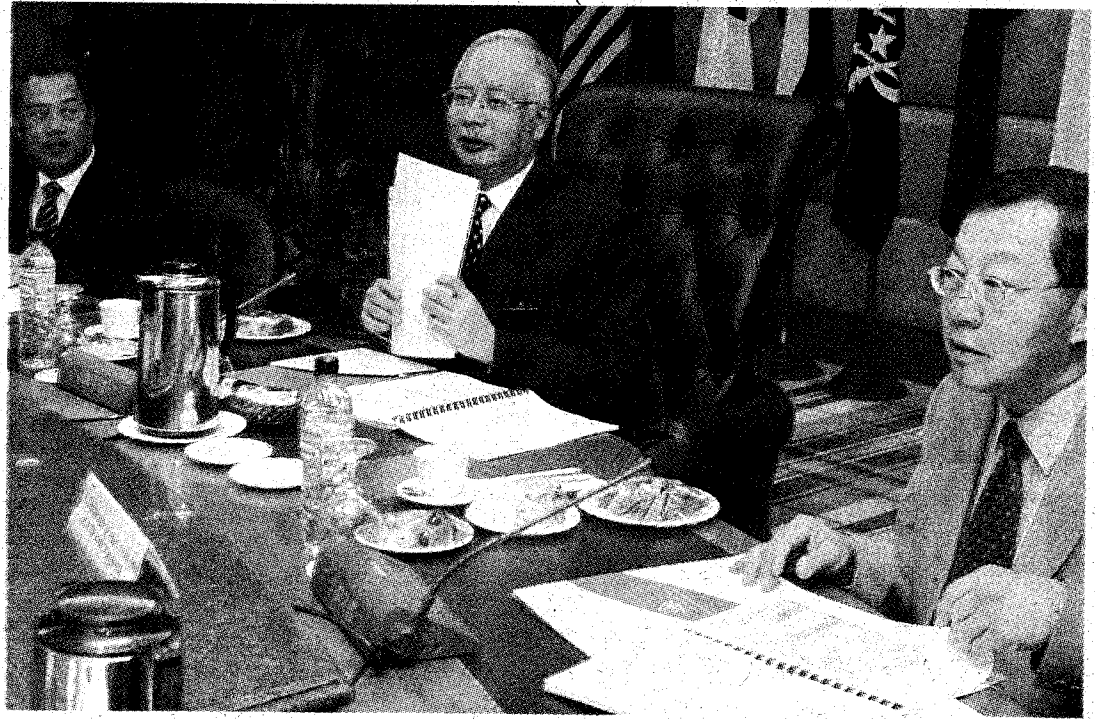
Other members of the committee include the ministers and deputy ministers of Education, Higher Education, Human Resources, Finance, Agriculture, Entrepreneur and Co-operative Development, and Science, Technology and Innovation.

The call to recruit more unemployed graduates into the civil service was made early last month by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The special committee also reviewed the action taken so far to address the problem. It would enable ministries to act in concert, where in the past they had done so on their own initiative.

Najib said the committee had yet to determine the actual number of unemployed graduates, as existing data was compiled from separate sources using different methodology.

While there were an estimated 60,000 unemployed graduates, Najib said they were defined according to three categories: un-



Najib chairing the first meeting of the special committee. With him are Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin (left) and Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri Dr Fong Chan Onn.

employed (those with no jobs at all), under or semi-employed (those who held part-time jobs), and those who were working in jobs that did not suit their qualifications, position or salary.

"When we say there are 60,000 unemployed graduates, we must be careful to note that these are as yet unrefined figures. They comprise these different categories of graduates," he said.

One of the committee's tasks is to streamline the figures so as to develop workable policies for the unemployment problem.

Najib said about 70 per cent of unemployed graduates were Bumiputeras and females.

The committee also agreed on the following:

- Executive Graduate Training Programme with GLCs and the private sector: Similar to an internship, this programme was

launched earlier, but it was found that some companies were not conducting proper training. The Second Finance Minister is to meet the GLCs and private sector companies to enhance the programme.

- Weak command of English and poor communication skills: Acknowledged as the main reason for graduates' unemployment, the Education and Higher Education ministries are to address this through reviews of the school and university curriculum.

- Professional courses in information communication technology: Najib said jobless graduates who took such courses at retraining centres found it easier to get jobs. The Higher Education Ministry will see whether they can be taught at university level.

- Manpower study: Will be conducted to determine the needs of

the Government and the private sector. The study will help universities and other training providers meet human capital requirements.

- Shortage of teachers: May be filled with jobless graduates keen on becoming teachers, if the Education Ministry finds it needs to review the teacher-student ratio.

- Entrepreneurship training programmes: Many already exist under various ministries and institutions. They will be further enhanced with special emphasis on graduates.

- Electronic Labour Exchange (ELX): This online job database is managed by the Human Resources Ministry and will be upgraded to become more user-friendly, with more kiosks available in public areas such as shopping malls. The ministry will also hold more job fairs.