

We can export education expertise, says Dr M

By WONG CHUN WAI and JACK WONG

KUCHING: The country must turn its tertiary education into an industry and export the expertise and skills, the Prime Minister said yesterday.

He said there was no reason why Malaysia's higher education could not be expanded into an industry when foreign countries were competing with each other to provide twinning programmes locally.

"They are actually exporting their expertise to us. We cannot just sit back and remain silent," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said before laying the foundation for Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) at Kota Samarahan.

He said universities must provide quality tertiary education and research programmes to be competitive internationally.

It was necessary for all sectors to inculcate the competitive spirit and universities were no exception.

He said although Malaysia's universities were still new compared with those overseas, they must improve education standards and emphasise on research and development.

Dr Mahathir chided some lecturers who did not bother to review their teaching materials. "They used the same materials year after year. Even the same jokes are used," he added.

He said research was

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an integral part of a university, adding that it must be consistent with the priority of the nation and must focus on the needs of the industry and the community.

"They must be mission-oriented and productive. The Government is prepared to allocate millions of ringgit for this," he added.

Local universities must also adopt a more contemporary approach in its management in order to be more aggressive, proactive and innovative.

Unimas has 120 students in the social science faculty and the resource science and technology faculty, with the first academic session starting Aug 9.

Six other faculties, including those for medicine, information technology and engineering, will be set up soon.

Also present at the ceremony were Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, Education Minister Datuk Dr Haji Sulaiman Daud and Chief Minister Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud.