

Export higher education skills, says PM

NST - 1 SEP 1993
By Calvin Goh

KUCHING, Tues. — Local universities should set high standards in all aspects of their activities so that they can be a model in the region and have their skills in higher education exported, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said there was no reason why the country's higher education system could not become an industry as can be seen today where foreign countries were competing to have twinning educational programmes with Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir added that these countries were in fact exporting skills which Malaysians also had. "We should strive to market our expertise and skills in education to the international community," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at a ceremony to lay the foundation stone of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) at Kota Samarahan, about 30km from here.

Unimas is Malaysia's eighth university, and is the first to be located outside Peninsular Malaysia. Its first batch of 120 students from all over the country began the academic term earlier this month.

Dr Mahathir also spoke on the need for universities to co-operate with the Government to meet the national development objectives of the Government in general and those of the universities in particular.

The Government, he said, was willing to accept any idea or research finding which would benefit the people and the nation.

However, it is important for academicians to be more sensitive to the issues of development and those relevant to the social, economic and political situation of the country.

Dr Mahathir also said that universities cannot be separated from society and the economy. Instead, they must have close relations with society and industry.

In this connection, the Prime Minister said universities should concentrate on getting closer to industry. The Government will give its support. But it is important that academicians change their attitude and work together with industry.

On university-Government relations, he said the Government did not wish to impose restrictions on academic activities which brought benefit to the nation.

He also said it could consider relaxing the control on

PLEASE TURN TO
PAGE 2, COL 1

Play bigger role in society, universities told

FROM PAGE ONE

universities to give them flexibility in order to be more effective in their administration.

The universities should also study their administra-

tion, method of making internal decisions as well as other issues that could increase their role in society.

They should look back at the system passed down from the colonial era so that

the university administration could be made more contemporary, which would allow it to move with the desired characteristics of quality being aggressive, pro-active and innovative.

Universities should also find ways to be more responsible and accountable.

He said these were the qualities that should be inculcated and promoted among the student community.