

ENSURE QUALITY COURSES

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PM warns against 'certificate mills'

By LIM AI LEE

PENANG: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called for rigorous standards to maintain the country's reputation as provider of quality education.

He said the Government would come down hard on private colleges which compromised on standards for quick profits.

The Prime Minister said the whole education industry could be brought to disrepute if certain colleges resorted to dubious arrangements or set up "certificate mills."

"Our credibility must not be undermined. Let me warn all that the Government will come down hard on

those who compromise on standards in the pursuit of quick profits," he said when opening Kolej Antarabangsa here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was poised to become the region's centre of education and various strategies were being proposed.

They included the proposed amendments to allow reputed universities to set up branch campuses in the country and simplifying regulations on entry and visa requirements for foreign students.

A National Accreditations Board was also being set up to ensure that the credentials of the institutions had international acceptance.

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Need to be selective in courses, says PM

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Dr Mahathir said the concept of Malaysia Incorporated could be applied to the educational system, with both the public and private sector co-operating to develop an education system which could take the best from both worlds.

"We have to keep in mind that Vision 2020 seeks to create a society based on science and technology. There is a need to be selective in the courses that are offered by educational institu-

tions.

"Already the Government-funded institutions are able to supply more than the country's needs in arts, humanities and social sciences.

"It would be worthwhile for private education institutions to seek areas that have not been explored such as aeronautics, production technology, computer-aided design, machining and manufacturing."

Dr Mahathir said the major thrust of the country's educational policy was to prepare young peo-

ple for jobs in a modern industrial society.

"We require skilled workers, artisans, craftsmen, commercial workers, technicians and skilled managers as the working base of our population.

"We expect schools, vocational institutes and private education establishments to produce enough of them. We also need more engineers, doctors, dentists, economists and accountants."

Dr Mahathir said the more dynamic the pace of modernisation, the great-

er would be its need for new technologies.

"The truth is the bulk of technology transfers takes place between developed nations and only a trickle finds its way to developing nations.

"This may be because we have not prepared our people well for the transfer to be facilitated. One of the goals of education is to prepare potential recipients for the technology transfer."

Dr Mahathir also noted that schools and other educational institutions now paid little attention to

imparting the right moral and ethical values.

"As a result, our society is less productive. It is time that this aspect be made a major target of all institutions.

"Education must be total. If a qualified person is to be productive, he must have the necessary ethics. He must know his responsibility to himself, the community and nation."

Dr Mahathir said the setting up of Kolej Antarabangsa marked a milestone in the history of education in the country.