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University-MIT

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE TO HELP SET UP VARSITY IN MALAYSIA

By: Syed Jamil Jaafar

BOSTON, Sept 25 (Bernama) -- A private university which will concentrate on research and development (R&D) in science and technology is being planned for establishment in Malaysia with help from the world renowned engineering studies centre -- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who visited the MIT here on Tuesday, was briefed on the plan and he expressed support for this effort by the private sector.

Sarawak entrepreneur Datuk Effendi Norwawi, who is chief executive of Encorp Group, and Sapura Holdings chairman Tan Sri Shamsuddin Abdul Kadir are the prime movers of this ambitious educational project scheduled to be launched next year.

Effendi, who accompanied Dr Mahathir on his visit to the MIT, told journalists that the Selangor government had agreed in principle to provide a site for the university.

The MIT had agreed to help in the planning and provision of the infrastructure and supply the faculty members and scientists.

"If everything goes well, we hope to begin post-graduate programmes for local university graduates next year so that research and development activities can begin quickly," Effendi said.

He said the university would be named Malaysia University of Science and Technology or MUST, and the promoters hoped to make it a centre of excellence in engineering, science and technology not only for Malaysia but also the Asian region.

He said MIT was chosen as the partner in the project because of its excellent record in R&D engineering activities which have produced hundreds of business enterprises.

"The MIT has close links with the industrial sector and the project we are planning can become a model for emulation," Effendi said.

He said the MUST project is non-commercial and non-profit motivated and is more of a national project by the private sector to strengthen the country's position in science and technology.

Dr Mahathir was welcomed to the MIT by its president Dr Charles M. Vest who later briefed him on its organisational set-up and activities.

The Prime Minister, who was accompanied by his wife Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, later visited the media laboratory to see research activities to produce tools to think with, such as computer games for children. -- BERNAMA

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