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Najib-University

COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY TO BEGIN OPERATIONS NEXT SEPTEMBER

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 2 (Bernama) -- The International and Commonwealth University of Malaysia will begin operations in September next year with an initial intake of 75 post-graduate students, Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today.

The courses would be in management studies, regional studies, Asian civilisations, and trade and investment laws of Asia, he said.

Najib said the university would operate from temporary premises in Ipoh until a permanent campus was developed on a 400-ha site in Tapah, Perak, along with a new township, by the Renong Group.

He told reporters this after handing over a letter of invitation to International and Commonwealth University of Malaysia Bhd (formerly known as Batang Padang Incorporated Bhd) chairman Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid, here.

The minister said the establishment of the university with an investment of RM600 million was aimed at setting up a credible and world class institution with the cooperation of the University of Cambridge in Britain.

This will be the firth private university in the country, after Universiti Telekom, Universiti Petronas, Universiti Tenaga and the Malaysia University of Science and Technology (MUST).

Najib said the university would commence graduate courses in September 2000 with an intake of 700 students. The courses offered would be engineering, computer science, development economics and regional studies.

The student population is expected to reach 2,600, the full capacity, by the year 2003, he said.

In his speech earlier, Najib said the university should be seen as Malaysia's contribution to the Commonwealth in the field of education.

The idea to set it up was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and it was well-received by the other Commonwealth member countries, he said.

Najib said the university's establishment had also become a subject of discussion at the 13th meeting of Commonwealth education ministers in Gabarone, Botswana last July.

Asked whether there will be more collaboration between international universities and local higher learning institutions, Najib said few more universities were waiting to be considered for other forms of collaboration with Malaysian enterprises.

However, it is not known how many and which universities are involved.

"The strategy for us particularly at first instance is to invite the best name in the academic world so that it will be synonymous with our concept of excellent education," he said

Ahmad Sarji, in his speech, said: "The aim of the university is to achieve the highest standards of academic excellence and to provide a world-class education to students of outstanding ability, whether from Malaysia, the Asean region, the Commonwealth and indeed from Europe itself."

He said the cooperation with Cambridge brought with it not only the traditions, experiences, and continuing advances of the cutting edge of knowledge of an old and distinguished university, but also a wealth of connections with other centres of academic excellence throughout the world.

Also present at the ceremony was University of Cambridge academic

advisory committee representative Prof. Dr Anil Seal. -- BERNAMA
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