

A dozens potential Nobel laureates

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By K. SUTHAKAR

PENANG: Malaysia has about a dozen researchers who stand a chance of realising the country's hope of producing a Nobel laureate in science by 2020.

Confederation of Scientific and Technological Associations in Malaysia (Costam) executive director Datuk Dr Mohinder Singh said yesterday the group's work had received international recognition.

"They are undertaking research in basic sciences where the chances of being picked is higher than those doing research in applied sciences," he said after attending the "Malaysian Science and Technology Congress '98" at Universiti Sains Malaysia.

The two-day congress includes three seminars, a symposium and a regional conference which

was opened by Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

Among those present were Costam president Tan Sri S.H. Augustine Ong and the university's deputy vice-chancellor (academic) Prof Bahardin Salleh.

Dr Mohinder Singh said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had expressed hope of at least one local researcher winning the Nobel prize by 2020.

He said local researchers had done well in physics, chemistry, biology and genetics.

"However, the emphasis in basic sciences is still low as more are involved in applied sciences

"Most Nobel laureates come from basic sciences such as bio-chemistry and genetics as it involves new discoveries," he said, adding that the country had about 10,000 researchers