

RM13.5bil allocation to boost education

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A TOTAL of RM13.5bil has been allocated to upgrade public education in the country.

This was in line with the Government's effort to make Malaysia a centre of excellence in education, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Last year's allocation was RM12.458bil.

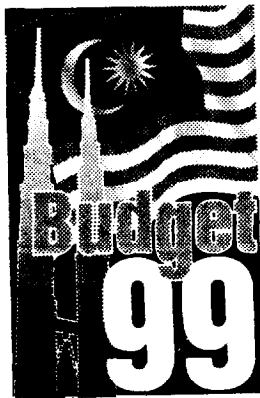
The allocation on education would be spent on providing and upgrading the educational infrastructure, supporting facilities and curriculum development, Dr Mahathir said.

"A total of RM8bil from the RM13.5bil will go towards expanding the primary and secondary education in the country. A total of 183 new primary and secondary schools will be opened while 1,217 new schools are being and will be constructed.

"Vocational and technical schools will continue to be upgraded and set up," he added.

Anticipating a sharp increase of student intake into local universities from 77,600 this year to 84,000 in 1999, Dr Mahathir said RM2.85bil had been set aside to improve the supporting facilities.

"The amount is to be



used for the construction of matriculation centres, the Medical Faculty of the International Islamic University in Pahang and the permanent campuses for Universiti Malaysia Sabah and University of Sarawak," he added.

The National Higher Education Fund would also receive a boost in the national budget.

"In addition, the Education Ministry, Entrepreneur Development Ministry, Human Resources Ministry and Youth and Sports Ministry will share a RM1.145bil allocation to provide various skills training programmes and to construct new training centres," he added.