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Mahathir-University

ASPIRE TO BE WORLD CLASS, PM TELLS NEW VARSITY

CYBERJAYA, July 8 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged the Multimedia University (MMU), the intellectual nerve centre of Cyberjaya, to aspire to be nothing less than a world class institution of higher learning.

The prime minister said it should aim for that kind of high standard in terms of the learning experience it would provide and the quality of its faculties, academia and students.

"It must be prepared to venture beyond traditional boundaries of education in order to meet the changing needs of the new digital age," he said in a message posted on the Internet in conjunction with the university's official opening tomorrow.

Dr Mahathir himself will do the honours of inaugurating the RM350 million institution which is built on a 80-hectare plot of land in Cyberjaya, one of Malaysia's two intelligent cities located within the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) project. He launched the Cyberjaya earlier today.

He said the opening of the MMU represented a critical milestone in the nation's evolution into a learning society.

He said just as the MSC was built as a test-bed for emerging information and multimedia technologies, the MMU was conceived as a showcase for the 21st century learning.

"Its role is expected to mirror that of Stamford University in the Silicon Valley in spawning next-generation technologies and knowledge workers who are capable of bringing products from concept to commercialisation," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the MMU would be the catalyst for knowledge creation, innovation and research and development collaboration among members of the academia, the private sector and other stakeholders.

He said as a greenfield project, the university had the advantage of learning from past experiences of others and would not be held back by rigid or entrenched practices.

"I am confident that this will give it the necessary posture to produce the best 21st century knowledge workers that the world can offer," he added.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak expressed the hope that the MMU would move to becoming a trendsetter in the global multimedia education in the future.

He said it was important for Malaysia to have a technologically competent, scientifically adept and information technology-skilled society as the next stage of the country's economic progress would have to be knowledge-based.

"We have to transform ourselves into learning entities at the individual, group, organisational, state and national levels. Ideally, learning should be our national passion," he said.

Energy, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Leo Moggie believed that the MMU would be successful in carrying out its role to support the growth and sustenance of the MSC, a 750 sq km area which has been designated as a hub for the development of multimedia products and services.

The university is projected to accommodate about 6,000 students in various multimedia disciplines by the year 2002.

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