

06/04/2001

Dr Mahathir to officially open IIUM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The International Islamic University Malaysia in Gombak will be officially opened by its founder, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, on April 17.

The Prime Minister will also open the sixth executive council session and The Second General Conference of The Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World (FUIW) in conjunction with the opening ceremony of the campus.

The conference will be attended by some 100 vice-chancellors, presidents and rectors of universities from 45 member countries of the FUIW.

This was announced today by IIUM Rector Prof Dr Mohd Kamal Hassan at a Press conference at the Gombak campus.

First established on May 10, 1983, with an initial intake of 153 students, IIUM today has 15,949 students.

IIUM's Gombak campus houses 10,000 students from nine faculties, while the rest are at its Kuantan campus in Pahang and matriculation centre in Petaling Jaya.

More than 17,000 students have graduated from the IIUM since its inception. Foreign students from 96 nations comprise 15 per cent of the student population.

The RM680 million Gombak campus spans 270 hectares and encompasses inter-linked buildings of Middle Eastern architecture.

The focal point of the university is the mosque, situated in the centre of the campus.

In keeping with its new surroundings and present-day values, the university has aptly called itself the "Garden of Knowledge and Virtue".

Mohd Kamal said today the conference would be held at the Legend Hotel from April 17 to 19 while the executive council session would meet for two days starting April 15.

The conference will have as its themes "Enhancing Scientific Research"; "Addressing the problems of the Muslim ummah"; "Linking research with comprehensive development" and; "Meeting the human resource needs of Islamic countries".

Among the topics to be discussed are the recognition of degrees between universities, drafting of an action plan for the FUIW for 2001-2003, proposing the charter for the next conference and deciding on the venue for the next conference.

There will also be an election to form the next executive council.

The FUIW held its first general conference in Rabat, Morocco, in 1998. Member universities are from countries including Spain, Holland, US, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Guinea, Bosnia, Turkey, Indonesia, Pakistan and Malaysia.

Mohd Kamal said besides the conference, the IIUM Students' Representative Council and International Students' Society would organise the IIUM Carnival 2001 at the main campus.

The four-day carnival will be opened by IIUM president Tan Sri Sanusi Junid at the auditorium on April 14.

It is being held at the close of the Taaruf week or the orientation week for the new students from the matriculation centre and direct intake students of IIUM.

Among the activities planned are stage performances, an International Islamic Cultural Competition, a mock trial, an IIUM convoy and a cycling

campaign.

There will also be food stalls offering local and international food.

The cycling campaign consists of the "Tour De Campus" with the rector, a treasure hunt and BMX show. It aims to promote an environmentally friendly campus and a healthy lifestyle through the use of cycles as the mode of transport on campus.

There will also be an Exhibition on Consumerism, conducted by the Malaysian Islamic Consumers' Association, Penang Consumers' Association and the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs.

For the International Islamic Cultural Competition, there will be performances by the international students from countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Croatia, Guinea, Somalia, China and Iraq.

The competition is to instil co-operation and friendship among youths of the various communities and to expose the public to the colourful traditions and cultures of the various Islamic countries.

There will also be daily stage performances from 2pm to 10pm featuring local nasyid groups, karaoke competitions, poetry recitations, percussion performances, friendly debates and games.

To promote the event, there will be a motorcycle convoy travelling around the Gombak area distributing pamphlets on the opening ceremony and subsequent events.