

# KUIM campus ground-breaking

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Wed.** — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will perform the ground-breaking ceremony for the new Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia (KUIM) campus in Nilai next Thursday.

KUIM, the country's 12th public university, will occupy a 188-hectare area in Bandar Baru Nilai, Negri Sembilan. The area was selected for its proximity to the Multimedia Super Corridor.

KUIM board of directors' chairman Tan Sri Yusof Noor told a Press conference here today that work will begin later this year and the three-phase development is expected to be completed by mid-2004.

The first phase, to cost RM700 million, will cater to about 5,000

students.

Yusof said the university, the first public Islamic university in the country, was unique because it would emphasise research and not just the acquisition of knowledge.

"Islamic universities must now be more modern and turn their attention towards research," he added.

This emphasis on research can be seen in the present student composition — 45 per cent are post-graduate students and the rest undergraduates.

He said the university plans to have faculties for science and technology. These will include a medical faculty which is expected to be set up next year; Science and Technology faculty; Public Health and Nursing as well as Education and Language Studies.

The university, which has about 1,500 students, at present occupies a

## ceremony by PM next Thursday

temporary campus in Kampung Pandan and has four faculties — Quran and Sunnah; Syariah and Judiciary; Dakwah and Islamic Management; and Economics and Muamalat (Islamic Banking). Instructions will be in Bahasa Melayu, Arabic and English.

KUIM was set up to enable the country to produce graduates with knowledge of Islamic studies to meet the needs of society.

About 255 students from its first batch will graduate next May.

Earlier, in an interview with the *New Straits Times*, KUIM's Dean of Economics and Muamalat Faculty, Prof Muhamad Muda, said there was a need to re-evaluate the curriculum for Islamic studies at institutions of higher learning to meet the changes of the modern world.

He said various advances taking place in science and technology re-

quired graduates of Islamic studies to have certain skills such as ICT to have better chances of employment.

Therefore, he said there was a need to review the curriculum of religious schools to bring them in line with national schools.

He added the review should look into providing equal opportunities for those doing Islamic studies in terms of access to proper learning environments and infrastructure.

Muhamad also said that subjects should be taught in a way that would generate interest among students and get them to be more critical in their thinking.

He said there was also a need for new thinking and approaches among Muslim thinkers and educational experts.

"For instance, we need doctors and scientists who can contribute to the development of Islam," he added.