

Proposed MJTU set to provide quality education



THE proposed Malaysia-Japan Technical University, scheduled to start classes next year, will be another boost to turn Malaysia into a regional centre for academic excellence.

As its name implies, it is a joint effort between the Malaysian and Japanese governments. However details on the proposed university are still a bit sketchy.

According to Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad, the project was first discussed between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Japanese counterpart Mr Koizumi at last year's Asean summit meeting in Brunei last year.

In fact, the project is being rushed through and so many of the key details have yet to be finalised. What is known is that the MJTU is a public university with Japan supplying most of the lecturers.

The lectures, therefore, will be conducted mainly in Japanese with Bahasa Malaysia and English being used where relevant. It will be an international university as Japanese and others will be encouraged to enrol as students.

As it was set up in such short notice, no decision has yet been made on where the campus is to be sited and the vice-chancellor has also not been appointed.

With Japanese being the main medium of instruction, it is quite likely too that the VC will be from Japan as well. It will be offering only engineering and technical courses.

The number of students to be enrolled has yet to be decided but the fees will definitely be higher than that charged by other public universities as it

will be bound to attract foreign students.

It will not be possible for the government to subsidise the foreign students as well as it will be too costly to do so. No doubt the tuition fees will be reasonable and competitive for both private local and foreign students.

The co-operation in this venture will enable Malaysia to use it to tap Japanese technical expertise and there is no better way of doing this than by using Japanese lecturers.

In this respect, students will have to do a foundation course in Japanese to enable them to follow the lectures and tutorials. After all, many Japanese lecturers also are not that familiar with English to use it to teach.

With the efforts of both governments, the proposed university should be able to maintain a high standard of education for its students. It will certainly provide quality education at an affordable price.

Even if the tuition fees are moderately higher than those charged by public universities, the fact is that the cost of living is much cheaper in Malaysia than Japan.

Japanese students too may be interested to study in this university as they will be assured that the standard of education will be equivalent to that of other Japanese universities as their teachers are also their own countrymen.

Apart from the lower costs, they will be able to study in a multi-racial environment that is not easily available in other countries. This experience alone is worth their while to do their degree programmes in this university.