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Dr M to launch varsity in Malacca

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MALACCA, Thurs. - Less than a year after taking in its first batch of 360 students, Kolej Universiti Teknikal Kebangsaan Malaysia, the country's 14th public university, will see the groundbreaking ceremony performed tomorrow at its campus in Durian Tunggal.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will perform the ceremony on a 310.4ha site in Durian Tunggal about 4.30pm tomorrow on his one-day official visit to the State.

Some 10,000 people are expected to witness the launch. Among them will be the Prime Minister's wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam and his wife Datin Seri Asmah Abdul Rahman.

Construction of the first phase of the university will begin at a cost of RM400 million in Bukit Senandung, Durian Tunggal. The construction is done under the design and built concept where a consortium of contractors have been appointed to build the campus.

Its construction will take between 24 and 30 months. Upon completion there will be an increase in intake for the 2004/2005 session.

The design is based upon a balanced development which gives emphasis on a "city university" and "open university" concept and it is hoped that it would generate various industries and commercial areas within Durian Tunggal and the Alor Gajah district.

The whole university itself is expected to be completed by 2010. The second and last phase would begin immediately after 2004. Upon its full completion in 2010, the university is expected to accommodate 10,000 students and offer 30 different courses.

The university now offers degree courses in electrical engineering, electronic engineering and Information Technology and Communication at its temporary site in Taman Tasik Utama, Ayer Keroh.

Besides performing the groundbreaking ceremony, Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah will also officiate at the World Customs Day celebration at the Malaysian Customs Academy in Bukit Baru at 9am.

Later, the Prime Minister will be briefed by Mohd Ali over Malacca's development plans. They are scheduled to perform their Friday prayers at the Bukit Katil mosque.

In the afternoon, Dr Mahathir is expected to launch the courses for chairman and secretary of Umno's divisional training bureau at Puteri Resort, Ayer Keroh before officiating the groundbreaking ceremony.

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