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Malaysia, Japan to set up new public university: Intake next year

Chok Suat Ling

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The Government will set up a new public university - the Malaysia-Japan Technical University - to enable students to gain knowledge from the most advanced country in Asia.

It will be the first time Malaysia is establishing a university with another country. The university will use three languages - Bahasa Malaysia, Japanese and English - for engineering and technical courses.

It will also admit students from Japan and other countries, and is expected to enrol its first batch of students next year.

Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad said today most of the lecturers would come from Japan.

He added that the move was in line with the Government's Look East policy and was the brainchild of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Musa said Dr Mahathir discussed the university's formation with his Japanese counterpart at the Asean Summit in Bandar Seri Begawan last year.

"The curriculum will be Japanese-based but with local input. Students who apply for places after their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia will have to undergo a foundation course in the Japanese language.

"While there will not be a main medium of instruction, Japanese will largely be used with English, and Bahasa Malaysia, where relevant," he said at his office.

There are 17 public higher educational institutions in the country.

"We still have to work out details like the appointment of the vice-chancellor, and whether the Unit Pusat Universiti will handle applications.

"While it will be a public university and therefore Government-sponsored, it might have different characteristics compared to other public universities where fee structure is concerned," Musa said, adding that fees might be higher.

Asked where the permanent campus would be located, Musa said it has not been decided yet.

"For the time being, students will be placed at a temporary campus in Kuala Lumpur. However, we have not decided where the campus will be."

Musa said the university would enable students to gain the latest technological knowledge.

On the preparation of hardware and software for the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English next year, Musa said 15 per cent of the hardware had been distributed to schools.

Distribution is expected to be completed by Dec 15.

Musa said he would view the complete version of the software's first release tomorrow.