

# Dr M: Foreign nations should pay for taking our students

26 JUL 2004

**MALACCA:** Malaysian students overseas should be considered national intellectual property and countries that want to keep them should be made to pay compensation, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"It cost the Government a lot of money to send our students overseas. The foreign countries choose the best among our overseas graduates to work in their land.

"They should pay us for having taken away our

graduates to work since, by right, (we paid for) the graduates' training and knowledge, (which) should be called intellectual property," he said at Multimedia University's fifth convocation here yesterday.

However, Dr Mahathir said the Government should offer incentives that were competitive with what overseas countries were offering to help stem the country's brain drain.

"I believe that our overseas graduates should return to Malaysia to work.

"I understand that while overseas wages might be worth twice or more of our currency, the cost of living here is half as expensive. You could still live comfortably here," he said when commenting on the brain-gain drive announced by his successor, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, in London on Saturday.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after being conferred an honorary doctorate degree in Knowledge Science by the university's Chancellor Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

A total of 2,585 undergraduates and postgraduates received their scrolls at the two-day convocation ceremony, which started on Saturday, at Dewan Seri Negeri here.