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Nobel laureate to give public lecture at USM

PENANG, Wed. - A public lecture, special forum and science motivation session will be among the highlights of Nobel Laureate Professor Gerardus 't Hooft's visit to Penang next week.

't Hooft is one of five Nobel laureates who will be in Malaysia from Monday as part of Academy of Sciences Malaysia's Nobel Prize Centennial Exhibition Kuala Lumpur 2004.

The professor of physics at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands will be hosted by Universiti Sains Malaysia from March 3 to March 8.

The public lecture at USM's Dewan Budaya at 9.30am on March 5 is themed "Admiring and Enjoying our Universe", while the oration on the same day at 3pm at the university's Dewan Persidangan Universiti is titled, "Physics at the Planck Scale: Where Gravitational Forces Collide Against the Laws of Quantum Mechanics".

't Hooft, who won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1999 for "elucidating the quantum structure of electroweak interactions in physics", is one of the most influential particle theorists in history.

USM Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dzul kifli Abdul Razak said:

"In carving ourselves a name locally and globally as a research-intensive university, USM is also intent on fulfilling the Federal Government's challenge of producing Malaysia's first Nobel Prize winner," Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had challenged the Malaysian scientific community in 1998 to strive for scientific excellence which may produce a Nobel Laureate by 2020.

Malaysia will be the first South-east Asian country to host the Nobel Prize Centennial event.