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PM: Chinese grads can help develop nation

KAMPAR, Sun. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is confident brilliant Chinese graduates can play a role in helping the Government develop the country.

The Prime Minister said graduates of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (Utar), in particular, would be able to contribute not only to the private sector but also to the Government.

"The Government has not only given the opportunity to the Chinese to set up their own university, but is also providing assistance.

"Our hope is that the graduates will in return contribute to the well-being of the nation," he said at the ground-breaking ceremony of the Utar campus today.

Present were Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and deputy president Datuk Seri Lim Ah Lek.

Dr Mahathir said Utar could produce patriotic students who would play their part in ensuring Malaysia achieved developed status by 2020.

The Prime Minister also announced that the Government would provide a launching grant to Utar.

Dr Mahathir was also confident that the Chinese community would be able to maintain its unity and strengthen ties with other races to share the responsibility of developing the country.

He also congratulated the Chinese for giving priority to education which he said was the secret of their success.

"They will go to great lengths in their quest for knowledge and at present, there are more than 250,000 Chinese citizens studying overseas."

He said Malaysians were lucky because the Government had provided adequate educational facilities.

The Government, he said, had made considerable efforts in improving tertiary education in the country, including allowing twinning programmes with foreign institutions and approving the setting up of more public and private universities.

Dr Mahathir also said he would help Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to develop the country even after retiring in October.

"I promised (Menteri Besar Datuk Seri) Tajol Rosli Ghazali that I would remain as an Umno and Barisan Nasional member after my retirement, during which I would have more time to help," he said.

Tajol Rosli had, in his speech earlier, called on Dr Mahathir to continue helping the party and the country after his retirement.