

Varsities Should Specialise To Excel, Says Dr Mahathir

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CYBERJAYA - Local universities should focus on specialised areas especially scientific-based, in order to become world-class institutions by the year 2020, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Friday.

The former prime minister said universities must carry out more scientific research for the betterment of mankind and revolutionise the way people live.

"Universities can no longer focus on general areas but excel in their specialised areas so that they can be the centre of research and reference for specific areas by the world," he said in his talk on "Universities in Vision 2020" at the Multimedia University, here.

"Universities must change their mindsets from merely producing graduates to become centres of excellence for their specialised areas.

"Universities in 2020 must be equally well developed as the country develops," he said.

With this approach, Dr Mahathir hoped the country's first ever Nobel laureate could be produced by 2020.

Later speaking to reporters, he said more efforts should be carried out by the Vatican in mending its relations with the Muslim world following Pope Benedict XVI's damaging statement last week.

The Muslim world, on the other hand, could react to the comment but not to the extent of burning embassies, he said.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on worldwide reactions over the pontiff's statement citing a medieval text that characterised some of the teachings of Prophet Muhammad as "evil and inhuman" particularly his alleged command to spread the faith by sword.