

Only 5 universities allowed to go to Geneva this year

NS - 10/4/2007

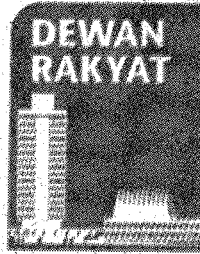
THE Higher Education Ministry has capped the number of universities sending entries to the Geneva International Exhibition on Product Invention and Service.

From 15 universities and 130 products this year, only five universities will be allowed to participate and display 30 products or inventions.

The five are: Universiti Malaysia Perlis; Universiti Institute Teknologi Mara; Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka; Universiti Perguruan Sultan Idris and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said the number of entries was reduced as "participation has been tightened".

However, Mustapa defend-



■ Reports by V. Vasudevan R.S. Kamini and Mazlinda Mahmood

ed the local academic fraternity's decision to participate in the exhibition.

"We have tightened the rules. It is good and it is endorsed by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (Wipo). Malaysia has benefit-



Datuk Mustapa Mohamed says participation has been tightened

ed from participating," he said in the lobby of parliament house after replying to points raised by members during the debate on the Royal Address.

Mustapa said the ministry

had already decided to limit participation at the expo before Wee Ka Siong (BN-Ayer Hitam) had raised the issue in parliament.

He said the entries submitted at the Geneva Expo were selected by a local panel of judges.

"Not every Tom, Dick and Harry can take part. The inventions are first judged by a local panel from Minds (Malaysia Invention and Design Society)."

Mustapa said it was not right to say the expo had not resulted in commercialisation of local inventions.

He said two academics, one in medicine and the other in environmental studies had their products commercialised.

"It is a good place for the

products to be exhibited and commercialised. Many industrialists visit it and it provides opportunities for the local academics," he said.

Earlier, Mustapa said that the quest by local universities to move up the rankings was just as important as commercialisation of inventions.

Last week, Wee had questioned the value of the exhibition and its academic merit.

Wee said last year, some 680 inventions were exhibited at the Geneva expo and of these, 152 or 23 per cent were from Malaysia.

Responding to Mustapa's statement, Wee said capping the number of entries was a sign the ministry was sensitive to the concerns raised about the expo.