

# Universiti Malaya 'will not be moved'

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Universiti Malaya will remain at its present location in Pantai.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his deputy, Datuk Seri Najib Razak, said yesterday it would not make way for a proposed commercial development.

Abdullah, who spoke after launching the Semarak Merdeka programme in Kepala Batas, Penang, said the present location was adequate for the university's operations.

"I want the campus to be retained there," the prime minister said, adding that the university could open branch campuses elsewhere if necessary.

It had been reported that real

estate company Guocoland (M) Berhad, controlled by Tan Sri Quek Leng Chan, had offered to relocate the university to Sepang and develop its present site into a RM10 billion commercial and residential hub.

Guocoland had, on Thursday, denied the report.

The current campus has 12 facilities, two academic buildings and three learning centres.

The plan was objected to by the university's academic staff association, alumni, lecturers, administrators and undergraduates.

Abdullah said the university, which is the oldest in Malaysia, had become a meaningful national institution that had served the country well.

"It has produced many graduates who have gone on to serve the country in the civil service and also the private sector.

"Its main campus is located

within an area that has all the facilities the university needs."

He said developers were interested in the site due to the huge profits to be reaped as a result of the commercial value of the land.

Najib said the government would not agree to the proposal to relocate the university if it went against the public interest.

"The government would consider the views of all quarters and so far, many had voiced opposition to the relocation," he said at the Bukit Jalil Stadium after witnessing the departure of National Service trainees to camps.

"This is because Universiti Malaya is an iconic institution of higher learning in the country."

Najib also said that he would seek an explanation from Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed and the university's administration on the issue.