

# Local varsity to produce military top brass

NST-19/11/2007

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The country will soon parade its own "home-grown generals", following the setting up of the Malaysian National Defence University (NDU).

Previously, the cream of the armed forces were all trained at foreign institutions, after initial admission to the Officer Cadet School, Royal Military College's Cadet Wing, and the Malaysian Military Academy.

Two RMC "graduates", former Army and Armed Forces chief Jen (rtd) Tan Sri Mohamad Zahidi Zainuddin and former Royal Malaysian Navy and retiring Armed Forces chief, Laksamana Tan Sri Mohamad Anwar Mohamad Noor, are among the top brass who underwent overseas courses for their career advancement.

The NDU, which will have twinning programmes with local and foreign institutions, will groom youths to not only become top-notch military officers but also civil servants, corporate leaders and individuals.

Applications are opened for its first intake of 500 students in July.

It will admit military cadets and civilians on a 80:20 ratio.

While cadets are required to undergo compulsory service in the armed forces, civilian graduates will serve as reservists, while pursuing their own careers.

The NDU is unique in that it offers a fully-sponsored four-year course, with a RM750 monthly allowance.

Successful military graduates will be commissioned with the rank equivalent to an army captain and be bonded to serve with the armed forces.

"Plans are being finalised for twinning programmes with local and foreign, civilian and defence universities.

"This is to ensure a highly educated and disciplined workforce is produced annually to meet the ever-increasing sophistication in defence and warfare technology,"

a senior Defence Ministry official said.

He said the NDU would be modelled on institutions such as the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst, the Royal Britannia Naval College (both in Britain), the United States Military Academy at Westpoint and the National Defence University in Washington, or similar institutions in Australia, South Korea, Japan, India and the Philippines.

The setting up of the NDU was made possible following the RM500 million upgrading of the 10-year-old Malaysian Military Academy (or Atma for Akademi Tentera Malaysia), and the university was subsequently gazetted in Parliament last Nov 10.

Atma commandant Mej Jen Datuk Ismail Samion, a Royal Malaysian Air Force engineer, is expected to head the NDU when the new administration is announced.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who is also the



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Defence Minister, is expected to officiate at NDU's opening which will take place middle of the year.

Najib had announced last year that the NDU would be like other institutions of higher learning, except that it would have the capability to specialise in fields such

as strategic studies which were suitable for the country's defence.

He had also said that each undergraduate would be required to study a modern and international language, other than English. The languages are likely to include Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Italian, German, French and Mandarin.

This is to enable the undergraduates to acquire additional skills to stay ahead of the competition.

The NDU will have three main programme components: Foundation studies, military studies and generic skills.

Military studies will include history, military law, strategy, leadership and psychology.

For a start, there will be three faculties — engineering; science and technology; and science management and defence — which will offer degree programmes.

Five diploma programmes will also be offered.