

Emphasis on R&D activities

By ROSLINA MOHAMAD
rosrina@thestar.com.my

KUANTAN: University College of Engineering and Technology Malaysia (Kuktem) has entered into 18 partnerships with various companies and universities to jointly work on research and development projects.

The works are, among others, for the development of herbal plants for medicinal and commercial uses, biotechnology, essential oil extract, medical diagnostic kit, manufacturing and automotive industry and industrial waste water treatment.

Kuktem deputy rector (research and innovation) Prof Dr Badhrulhisham Abdul Aziz said it was high time that emphasis was given to research and development activities.

"Such a focus will be able to generate a lot of interest, a huge amount of work and eventually, spur economic activities.

"We aim at developing local technology with local contents that will help our own entrepreneurs to strive

even at the international level," he said in an interview at his office.

He noted that it might take a while before the objectives could be achieved but it was not impossible as the country had the workforce with the talents, ideas and zest.

"The partnerships that we have now reflect the growing interest and confidence they have in local researchers.

"However, most importantly, it can help develop the country's human capital in line with the aspirations of the Government under the 9th Malaysian Plan," Dr Badhrulhisham said.

The economic landscape was changing globally and there were new challenges to face and the education system must ensure that undergraduates receive the necessary training and knowledge, he added.

"We have heard grousing of how incompetent most graduates are nowadays and Kuktem is adamant to rebut such notions," Dr Badhrulhisham said.

He said Kuktem's undergraduates were exposed to works on designing, did a lot of research as well as underwent industrial training for six months.

The students would also tag along with their lecturers who were involved in the partnerships with companies so that they would have ideas on how to deal with investors in the future, he added.

"Students must be made to understand that it is a tough world outside and it is going to be critical in the next 10 years as I personally feel there will be a saturation of engineers in the country," he said.

As such, Dr Badhrulhisham said the education system must adopt strategies that would groom local graduates who could survive and perform in any kind of workplace including working abroad.

"One must also look at the possibility of sending an able workforce overseas especially to the Middle East where jobs were aplenty in the oil and gas industry," he said.

monday
The Star
7/8/2006