

# PM: Varsities must help meet educational needs

N.S.T 12/08/08 M/S 2

■ **By Noor Adzman Baharuddin and Adib Povera**  
news@nst.com.my

**SUNGAI PETANI:** Local universities should step up their capacity-building to meet the growing demand for places of study, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The prime minister said the expansion of educational opportunities should provide students with value-for-money higher education.

"This would help the nation meet the demand for skilled human capital," he said at the opening of the new campus of the Asian Institute of Medicine, Science and Technology (AIMST) University in Semeling near here yesterday.

Present were MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, AIMST University chairman Tan Sri Dr K. Ampikaipakan and Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman chairman Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik.

Abdullah said the setting up of AIMST University was a historic moment since it marked the completion of a phase in the country's educational development in which five private colleges would be upgraded to universities.

He praised AIMST University for focusing on medicine and its strong biotechnology programme.

He said the university should also collaborate with nearby Kulim High Tech Park in information communication technology.

"Malaysia is one of the top three destinations for outsourcing and shared services. I hope AIMST



Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi getting a closer look at oral care demonstrated by dentistry students at AIMST University. With him are chancellor Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu and Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin (right).

University would build a strong reputation in ICT and produce software engineers and develop business progress outsourcing professionals whom we urgently need."

He said the government recognised the efforts of many in making the university a reality.

"AIMST University is a symbol

and testament to the fact that Malaysians of all races can stand united as one.

"Given this noble goal and AIMST University's vision to become a leading regional university, the government would continue to support its mission."

Earlier, Samy Vellu, the founder and chancellor of AIMST University,

thanked Abdullah and the government for its support.

At present, 2,300 undergraduates are enrolled in the university.

Founded in March 2001 and conferred university status six years later, AIMST was established by the Maju Institute of Educational Development, the education arm of the MIC.