

# Move to improve education system in varsities

**PUTRAJAYA:** The education system in Malaysia's public universities must be improved with greater transparency and meritocracy, said Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed.

He said this was among the issues decided at the inaugural meeting of various government agencies and university representatives to further boost the performance of the universities.

"We will also continue with our earlier plan to create apex universities and give more autonomous power to universities with financial freedom to the vice-chancellors," he told reporters after the meeting yesterday.

Mustapa said various government agencies would work together with the Higher Education Ministry to bring an overall improvement to public universities.

The aim is also to push up the world ranking of the country's 22 local public universities.

He said that in principle, it was agreed that a few regulations and laws pertaining to universities would be amended to pave the way for the planned improvements, including the Financial Procedures Act.

"The amendments would be proposed to the Cabinet in due course,"

said Mustapa.

He said that the plan would also include getting highly qualified lecturers, where merit would not be compromised.

Mustapa also said 50 participants from 42 countries would take part in the annual International Bahasa Melayu Orator Competition this year.

The participation this year is nearly double last year's 23 participating countries, he said.