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Malaysia Emerges Stronger In Global Higher Education Landscape, Says Thai Academic

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Book author Datuk Dr Qasim Ahmad (third, left) speaks as a panellist during a forum on Higher Education: Democratisation, Commercialisation and Internationalisation at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) today.

BANGI, April 16 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's higher education sector has recorded significant progress over the past two decades, particularly in university rankings, research capacity and international reputation, says a Thai higher education expert.

Chairperson of the Committee on Promoting and Enhancing Higher Education towards Quality and International Standards, at the Thai Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, Prof Dr Rattachat Mongkonavin, said Malaysia has performed strongly in strengthening its academic standing.

He said the country has successfully built a strong reputation globally while attracting high-calibre researchers and investing substantially in research infrastructure.



“For Malaysia, in my opinion, you have done really well. Looking back, maybe 20 years ago, we started at the same point in the ranking game that measures the quality of higher education and universities.

“We have seen success in Malaysian education. Malaysia has done really well in terms of research and attracting high-calibre researchers to work in Malaysia, you have done that really well. You’ve invested a lot of money into research centres and so on,” he said.

He said this when speaking as a panellist at the AKEPT Let’s Talk About Series Special Edition: Telaah, titled Higher Education: Democratisation, Commercialisation and Internationalisation, here today.

The programme was moderated by Deputy Director, Centre for Leadership Research and Global Outreach (CRO), Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT) Associate Professor Dr Ummu Atiyah Ahmad Zakuan.

The panel included the author of the book, 'Pengajian Tinggi: Pendemokrasian, Pengkomersialan dan Pengantarabangsaan, Prof Datuk Dr Qasim Ahmad and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International) Universiti Malaya Prof Dr Hasniza Zaman Huri.

Rattachat stressed that the next phase for Malaysia is to determine whether it aims to become a global education hub independently or as part of a broader regional network.

According to him, a regional approach would provide greater flexibility, opportunities and exposure for students, enabling them to better understand global dynamics and enhance employability.

“Rather than competing individually, countries in the region should come together with a clear plan to strengthen the region as a whole. This will create a stronger and more sustainable education hub,” he said.

Meanwhile, Hasniza said that in terms of academic and employer reputation, Malaysia has developed a strong standing, but greater emphasis is needed on enhancing research outcomes and ensuring long-term sustainability to remain competitive globally.

“What we need to do more is basically to look into the research component and also the outcome, especially the outcome of the research and how we actually turn our research into products or a more visible outcome.

“Another thing that we have to be cautious with is the sustainability...to start something is easy and to enter rankings may be achievable, but what matters is sustaining and maintaining it to ensure we remain a globalised university at all times,” she said.

Meanwhile, Qasim highlighted the importance of democratisation and commercialisation in higher education, particularly in expanding access and translating academic research into marketable outcomes.

‘Telaah’, initiated by the Ministry of Higher Education (KPT), is a contemporary platform that supports the nation’s grand aspiration to cultivate a discourse based on reading and transforming the passion for knowledge into a national practice.

Airing once a week on an online platform, ‘Telaah’ brings together scholars, writers, and the general public in open discussions that foster a deeper understanding of various societal and civilisational issues, in line with the aspirations of Malaysia MADANI.

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