Maszlee: Ranking not our priority

Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik (fourth from left) congratulating Universiti Malaya Vice-Chancellor Datuk Dr Abdul Rahim Hashim in Putrajaya yesterday after UM's rise in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2020.

PUTRAJAYA: University rankings have never been a priority for the Education Ministry, said Dr Maszlee Malik.

The education minister said the ministry's priority was on creating an intellectual ecosystem for the country.

"We have never prioritised rankings since I took office.

"The substance of the university is of utmost importance. Our aim is to create an intelligent ecosystem.

"To achieve that, we want our universities to become problem-solvers of issues faced by society and the nation," he said during the announcement of the Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings (QS-WUR) 2020 here yesterday.

"Rankings are good in getting international students to come (to study in Malaysia).

"Normally, international students from developed nations would look at the rankings before coming to Malaysia."

He said the government was on the right track in preparing higher education institutions to step up their quality, as the move towards the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) loomed large.

"This indirectly puts Malaysia as one of the higher education hubs in the region and destination for further studies.

"Universities should have the ability to produce multitalented graduates who are resilient and can adapt to changes."

Universiti Malaya (UM) was ranked 70th, climbing 17 spots from last year's position.

Four other universities scored higher rankings than last year. They are Universiti Putra Malaysia (159th place from 202th), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (160th from 184th), Universiti Sains Malaysia (165th from 207th) and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (217th from 228th).

Fifteen other universities (public and private) made it to the top 1,000.

They are UCSI University, Universiti Teknologi Petronas, Taylor's University, Management and Science University, Universiti Utara Malaysia, International Islamic University Malaysia, University Malaysia Perlis, Sunway University, Universiti Malaysia Pahang, Multimedia University, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, University of Malaysia Sabah and Universiti Teknologi Mara.