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Khaled hails achievement, believes better results to come

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PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's top local universities' improved ranking in the Times Higher Education-QS (THE-QS) World University Rankings 2008 is an achievement to be proud of, said Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin.

"It is something to be proud of that a number of Malaysian institutions have attained such high positions in the rankings. I believe that our local universities will improve even further in the years to come," he told *The Star*.

Asked about the drop of the rank-



"In the apex university, we are looking to the future and choosing a university that is the most capable of being transformed and becoming world-class in 10 to 15 years," he said.

USM deputy vice-chancellor (Academic and International Affairs) Prof Ahmad Shukri Mustapa Kamal said the university would scrutinise the data to see the reason for its drop.

"I am from the school of thought that the rankings are useful but not absolute," he said.

Acting Universiti Malaya (UM) vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Muhamad Rasat Muhamad said UM's improved showing proved that the university's strategic plan, implemented two years ago, was showing results.

"UM fully supports the ministry in realising the national aspiration of having one or more of Malaysia's universities in the top 200 of the THE-QS ranking by 2010," he said.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan Shahabudin said the improvement in the ranking was a collective effort.

"We have worked very hard by consolidating our research, publishing our work, having more international collaborations and monitoring the number of citations per month," she said.

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Nik Mustapha Raja Abdullah said UPM

improved by overcoming weaknesses identified through analyses of the previous years' results.

"There have been improvements in several areas including the number of papers published in high impact journals, increase in citations and aggressive internationalisation programmes," he said.

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Zaini Ujang said the university had improved in three of the six criteria used to compile the rankings.

ing of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) from 307 to 313 despite its status as an apex (accelerated programme for excellence) university, Khaled said the criteria used for the rankings and the apex programme were different.