

Colleges say no to ratings

■ By SIMRIT KAUR

KUALA LUMPUR: Private colleges, reacting to an Education Ministry proposal to rate their courses, fear that such rating can turn away prospective students.

National Association of Private Education Institutions (Napei) president Dr Mohamed Thalha said the association was against the system as colleges with a lower rating might not be able to attract students.

"This may not only endanger their current investments but also affect any future investments in these institutions."

He said the industry should be allowed to develop first and

Group: Let industry develop first

a rating mechanism introduced at a later stage, in consultation with representative bodies of private institutions.

"The association has recommended to all our 63 members not to support the rating system," he told *The Star*.

National Accreditation Board chief executive Prof Dr Mohamed Suleiman had said in a letter to private colleges that their courses would be categorised as: very competitive, competitive, less competitive and not competitive.

In a questionnaire the board asked the colleges to indicate

whether they "agree" or "disagree" with the rating system.

However, no deadline has been set and the board has not indicated if the views of colleges would have any bearing on the final decision.

Prof Dr Mohamed Suleiman, in his letter dated Sept 27, said teaching quality would be given the most weightage in deciding the ratings.

He said 30% of total points would come from teaching. The rest would come from general information on the course (5%), curriculum (20%), facilities and equip-

ment (20%), management systems (10%), and quality of question papers and answers (15%).

Prof Dr Mohamed Suleiman said the Education Ministry planned to publish the ratings in newspapers.

The Malaysian Association of Private Colleges (Mapco) secretary-general Datuk Teo Chiang Liang said that the measurement should be quantitative.

"We also need to know who will be involved in doing the evaluation. Will they all be from public universities or will there be representation

from the private sector?"

Inti College Malaysia vice-president Dr Lee Fah On said that the mechanism and criteria to be used by the board must be transparent, especially for more nebulous criteria like teaching quality.

"Ideally, colleges should be given a list of the evaluation criteria to be used so that they can prepare themselves adequately."

"A grace period of two years should also be given and, in the initial stage, the exercise should be voluntary," he said.

A private college operator said that for the ratings system to be fair, public universities should also be included.