

Inti sees 30% foreign students

By LEE KAR YEAN

INTI Universal Holdings Bhd, the operator of Inti colleges in Malaysia whose listing was formally transferred from the KLSE second board to the main board yesterday, expects 30% of its student enrolment to be foreigners by 2010.

Its managing director, Tan Yew Sing, said the group was on an aggressive expansion drive both locally and overseas to increase its student population from 11,000 to 20,000 in 10 years.

Foreign students currently account for about 17% of the total enrolment of the Inti group, which has five campuses located in Nilai, Subang Jaya, Penang, Kota Kinabalu and Kuching.

"We have established a recruit-

ing network worldwide to attract foreign students, particularly for our business administration and computer courses," Tan told *Star Business*.

On Inti's overseas operation, he said the group's branch college in Bangkok — St Theresa Inti College — would open next April.

"We are also expanding our franchise programme to China, Vietnam, Thailand and Hong Kong under which overseas students can take business management and computer courses," said Tan.

Under the franchise programme, foreign students will spend the first few years of their courses in their respective countries before doing the final year of their studies in Malaysia.

Tan said the group expected better business next year in line with its ongoing expansion plan, both locally and abroad.

Following the company's listing transfer yesterday, its shares opened on the main board at RM4, up from its last traded price of RM3.76.

The counter drifted to a low of RM3.78 during the day before closing at RM3.98 with 156 lots changing hands.

Tan said he was satisfied with the opening price in view of the bearish sentiment on the KLSE, adding that the buying support was a vote of confidence in the group from investors.

He said Inti's five campuses currently enjoyed the highest student

enrolment among private colleges in the country at 11,000.

Higher private education, Tan said, would continue to be given top priority in the country in view of the increasing emphasis placed by the government on education excellence.

"It is the vision of the government to increase the percentage of student population in tertiary education to 40% in 2010 and 55% by 2020," he said.

At the moment the percentage of students pursuing tertiary education was 22% compared with only 7% in 1990, said Tan.

"Therefore we see a lot of room for growth for higher private education operators in the country," he added.