

(F)

97:

MAHATHIR (BERNAMA EX)

BY JAAFAR HUSSIN

KUALA LUMPUR, OCT. 24 (BERNAMA) -- STUDENTS GOING FOR STUDIES OVERSEAS IN FUTURE WILL BE REQUIRED TO REGISTER WITH THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION.

AT PRESENT, ONLY GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED STUDENTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, INDONESIA, PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH ARE REGISTERED WITH THE MINISTRY.

THE MINISTER, DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMED, SAID TODAY PARENTS OF STUDENTS WOULD ALSO BE ASKED TO GUARANTEE THAT THEIR CHILDREN'S TRIPS OVERSEAS WERE STRICTLY FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH BERNAMA, THE MINISTER SAID THAT THE NEW CONDITIONS WERE PART OF THE STRICT MEASURES TAKEN BY HIS MINISTRY FOLLOWING DEMONSTRATIONS BY MALAYSIAN STUDENTS DURING TUN ABDUL RAZAK'S RECENT VISIT TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

HE SAID THE CONDITIONS, IN CONFORMITY WITH THE UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY COLLEGES ACT, WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED +AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.+

HOWEVER, IT WOULD TAKE TIME TO ENFORCE THE MEASURES DUE TO SEVERAL FACTORS, INCLUDING THE SHORTAGE OF STAFF. -- BERNAMA MORE 1912/ZCM

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DR. MAHATHIR SAID SUCH STEPS WERE NECESSARY BECAUSE SOME MALAYSIAN STUDENTS ABROAD HAD ABUSED THE GOVERNMENT'S LIBERAL POLICY ON THE MATTER.

HE SAID, RECENT EVENTS HAD SHOWN THAT NOT ALL MALAYSIAN STUDENTS ABROAD HAD GONE FOR STUDY BUT FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

+THEIR OBJECT IS NOT ONLY OPPOSED TO THE COUNTRY'S NEEDS AND INTERESTS BUT ALSO HARM MALAYSIA'S GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE HOST COUNTRIES,+ HE ADDED.

+THEIR ACTION ALSO BENEFITTED CERTAIN GROUPS LIKE THE COMMUNIST TERRORISTS AND ANTI-NATIONAL ELEMENTS.+

THE MINISTER SAID MALAYSIA WAS MOST LIBERAL TOWARDS ITS CITIZENS WHO WERE GOING ABROAD AND ON FUNDS TO BE TAKEN OUT OF THE COUNTRY.

MOST COUNTRIES IMPOSED TIGHT CONDITIONS ON THEIR CITIZENS GOING OVERSEAS. SUCH PERSONS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO STATE THE AMOUNT OF MONEY TO BE TAKEN OUT AND TO PROVIDE GUARANTEE DEPOSITS.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID THE NEW CONDITIONS WOULD ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE THAT MALAYSIAN STUDENTS OVERSEAS CONCENTRATED ON THEIR STUDIES AND WERE NOT INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES PREJUDICIAL TO THE NATION. --BERNAMA MORE 1841/LK

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MAHATHIR 3 KUALA LUMPUR (BERNAMA EX)

WITH THIS, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO KNOW THE REASON FOR THEIR GOING AND THE FIELDS OF STUDY THEY HAD CHOSEN SO THAT THEY WOULD BE IN LINE WITH THE COUNTRY'S NEEDS.

+APART FROM THIS, SUCH MEASURES WILL ALSO HELP US TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN BONA FIDE STUDENTS AND THOSE WHO HAD BAD INTENTIONS, HE SAID.

THE MINISTER GAVE THE ASSURANCE THAT THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE NEW MEASURES WAS NOT AIMED AT ISOLATING MALAYSIAN STUDENTS ACTIVITIES ABROAD BUT RATHER TO SAFEGUARD THE INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY AND THE STUDENTS THEMSELVES.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE MINISTRY HAD NOT DECIDED ON WHAT ACTION TO TAKE AGAINST THOSE STUDENTS INVOLVED IN THE DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

HE SAID ANY ACTION TAKEN WOULD HAVE TO BE BASED ON PUBLIC CONSENSUS +BECAUSE OUR ADMINISTRATION FOLLOWS THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE+.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE INVOLVED IN THE DEMONSTRATIONS.

HE DENIED CERTAIN CLAIMS THAT THE STUDENTS HAD DEMONSTRATED DUE TO THE LACK OF INFORMATION ON THE ACTUAL SITUATION AND DEVELOPMENTS AT HOME.

HE SAID: +IT IS ABSURD THAT THIS SMALL GROUP DID NOT KNOW THE ACTUAL SITUATION WHEN OTHER STUDENTS DID.+ --BERNAMA MORE

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+IF IT IS TRUE THAT OUR STUDENTS THERE DO NOT GET ENOUGH INFORMATION ABOUT OUR COUNTRY, THEN THE NUMBER OF THE DEMONSTRATORS WOULD HAVE BEEN LARGER,+ HE SAID.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID HIS MINISTRY WOULD WORK CLOSELY WITH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO CHANNEL MORE INFORMATION ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY TO MALAYSIAN STUDENTS ABROAD.

THE MINISTRY WOULD ALSO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING MORE STUDENT CENTRES OVERSEAS TO CATER TO THE NEEDS OF MALAYSIAN STUDENTS.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID HE HAD PLANNED TO VISIT COUNTRIES THAT HAD LARGE NUMBERS OF MALAYSIAN STUDENTS, INCLUDING AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, TO EXPLAIN RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY.

+HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF THE RECENT INCIDENTS I FEEL THAT SOME OF OUR STUDENTS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND ARE NOT READY TO LEARN THE ACTUAL SITUATION AND AS SUCH IT WOULD BE USELESS FOR ME TO MEET THEM AT THE MOMENT,+ HE SAID. --BERNAMA 1901/LK