

ABDULLAH-STUDENTS

FROM ABDUL RAHMAN SULAIMAN

TOWNSVILLE, AUG. 11 (BERNAMA) -- AUSTRALIA HAS AGREED TO PROVIDE MALAYSIAN STUDENTS WITH MORE PLACES IN ITS INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING, EDUCATION MINISTER DATUK ABDULLAH HAJI AHMAD BADAWI SAID HERE TODAY.

THE AGREEMENT WAS CONVEYED TO THE MINISTER BY HIS AUSTRALIAN COUNTERPART, SENATOR SUSAN RYAN, DURING THEIR TALKS IN CANBERRA YESTERDAY.

DATUK ABDULLAH, WHO IS HERE ACCOMPANYING PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT, SAID HE WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED WITH THE WAY AUSTRALIA WAS RESPONDING TO MALAYSIA'S REQUESTS.

ALTHOUGH THE MINISTER DID NOT DISCLOSE DETAILS, AN INCREASED MALAYSIAN STUDENT INTAKE BY AUSTRALIA WOULD GREATLY RELIEVE MALAYSIA'S TASK OF HAVING TO SHOP AROUND ELSEWHERE FOR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ITS STUDENTS.

PRIOR TO THIS, THERE WAS MISAPPREHENSION IN MALAYSIA OVER AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE POLICIES ON FOREIGN STUDENTS IN THE LIGHT OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE MATTER BY TWO REPORTS NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT. --MORE
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THE REPORTS ARE THE +GOLDRING REPORT+ AND +THE JACKSON REPORT+ WHOSE CONTENT WERE DESCRIBED BY MALAYSIAN OFFICIALS AS NOT VERY FAVOURABLE.

THE PRESSURE TO SECURE MORE STUDY PLACES HAD BEEN GREATLY FELT BY MALAYSIANS OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS DUE TO LIMITED NUMBER OF PLACES IN LOCAL UNIVERSITIES AS OPPOSED TO INCREASING DEMAND AND RISING COST OF EDUCATION IN BRITAIN, THE TRADITIONAL PLACE FOR MALAYS CAN STUDENTS.

MALAYSIA NOW HAS ABOUT 58,000 STUDENTS IN AUSTRALIA, BRITAIN, THE UNITED STATES, CANADA, INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES COMPARED WITH ONLY 52,000 IN UNIVERSITIES AT HOME.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAD ANNOUNCED EARLIER ITS DECISION TO PROVIDE 1,713 PLACES TO MALAYSIAN STUDENTS FROM THE QUOTA OF 3,000 FOREIGN STUDENTS IT INTENDS TO TAKE IN NEXT YEAR.

AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER BOB HAWKE ASSURED DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR DURING THEIR MEETING TWO DAYS AGO THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT MAKE ANY UNILATERAL MOVE ON MATTERS CONCERNING EDUCATION THAT COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT MALAYSIA. --MORE
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YESTERDAY'S MEETING BETWEEN DATUK ABDULLAH AND SENATOR RYAN WAS A FOLLOW-UP OF THE EARLIER DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS.

DATUK ABDULLAH SAID SENATOR RYAN ALSO RAISED THE QUESTION OF DISPERSING MALAYSIAN STUDENTS TO UNIVERSITIES, OTHER THAN THE FEW TRADITIONAL CHOICES IN AUSTRALIA.

HE SAID HE TOLD SENATOR RYAN THAT THIS WOULD CERTAINLY BE DONE ONCE THE PROBLEM OF RECOGNITION OF NON-TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS WAS RESOLVED.

HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH IT WAS MATTER FOR THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT TO DECIDE, IT WAS NOT +AS SIMPLE AS IT SEEMS+ BECAUSE IT ALSO INVOLVED OTHER BODIES, PARTICULARLY WHEN THE QUALIFICATIONS TO BE RECOGNIZED WERE PROFESSIONAL IN NATURE SUCH AS MEDICINE, ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURE.

+THERE IS NO POINT IN US RECOGNIZING SUCH DEGREES IF THE RESPECTIVE PROFESSIONAL BODIES ARE NOT READY TO ACCEPT THE GRADUATES CONCERNED AS THEIR MEMBERS,+ HE SAID. -- PERNAMA.