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Fees

AUSSIE UNIVERSITIES TO THE RESCUE OF M'SIAN STUDENTS

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 20 (Bernama) -- With the depreciation of the ringgit, several Australian universities have been extending assistance to many of the 14,000 Malaysian students by deferring the payment of fees.

Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia Robert Cotton said other measures include placing them under the universities' loan scheme.

"So there isn't sort of just one answer, there are a number of answers," he said when asked what steps the Australian government is taking to alleviate the financial woes being faced by Malaysian students in the light of the depreciated ringgit against major currencies such as the US dollar.

In an interview with Bernama here yesterday, Cotton said the Australian universities were aware of the plight and concern of the Malaysian students and are taking the necessary measures to reduce their burden.

"(But) much depend on the ability of the institutions and the state governments," he said.

He said Australia and Malaysia have had long-standing ties as far as education was concerned.

The students' plight is expected to be raised during the meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Australian counterpart John Howard who will make a two-day visit to Malaysia beginning Monday.

It was reported that New Zealand universities have also introduced similar measures for Malaysian and other Asian students.

Cotton said during Howard's visit here, a number of agreements and memoranda of understanding may be signed between the governments and the private sector of the two countries.

One such agreement would be between Sunway College and Australia's Monash University to set up a branch campus here.

Cotton said with the setting up of more branch campuses in Malaysia, Malaysians would be able to enjoy a much reasonable fee structure.

On the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), Cotton said a number of Australian firms have shown interest in participating in the project.

He also said Howard would be briefed on the two Australian companies which have been given MSC status. -- BERNAMA

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