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Najib-Britain

PERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE COLLEGES TO BE AUDITED- NAJIB

LONDON, July 15 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Education Ministry will cooperate with British education agencies to study and ensure that the performance of private institutions of higher learning in Malaysia attain a level acceptable to the ministry, Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today.

Speaking at a news conference after talks with the Secretary of Education and Employment David Blunkett here, he said he had discussed such an audit with the UK Education Council Funding Authority and the Quality Assurance Agency here.

The study and assessment would particularly cover the 10 private colleges which had been permitted to undertake the 3+0 programme, he said.

Under the programme students attending colleges with twinning programme would do the whole course in Malaysia without having to go overseas.

The auditing bodies would work in collaboration with the National Accreditation Board, he said.

Najib said he discussed with Blunkett Malaysia's aspiration to be a regional centre of excellence for education and also the wish expressed by Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that students from the United Kingdom and Britain continue their studies in Malaysia.

Four British universities - Sheffield, Bristol, Birmingham and De Montfort were working out details of programmes to have offshore campuses in Malaysia, Najib said.

Asked whether the establishment of such campuses would run counter to the National Education Act which stipulated that the medium of instruction should be in the national language, he said there was a provision in the Higher Education Act for the use of English.

Nevertheless the national language would not be neglected as Malaysian Studies and Moral Education and Islamic Education would have to be taught in the national language.

There would also be Bahasa Malaysia courses for citizens and non-citizens at such campuses.

Najib said he also discussed with Blunkett the need for English language teachers in Malaysia.

"Apart from training our own teachers in the language, we also sought the cooperation of Britain in this area. Perhaps British graduates will like to widen their experience overseas such as by teaching English Language overseas as they have done in Japan and so on," he said.

On Malaysians studying in Britain seeking employment locally to gain experience before returning to Malaysia which was going through an economic slowdown, he said follow-up discussions would be held with the British Government as this not only involved the Education Department but also the British Home Office which issued the work permits.

Blunkett agreed in principle to the proposal that they work here but this depended on sectorial requirements nevertheless the British Government would consider such employment on a short term basis.

Najib, arrived here on Saturday for a week-long official visit and will hold talks with Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and other officials before returning home.

--BERNAMA

WAH AAM