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#### Frequent visits yielding results

Chok Suat Ling in Leeds, United Kingdom

FREQUENT visits by Malaysian leaders to Britain to meet local students pursuing higher education there has helped them gain an insight into current political developments in Malaysia.

This in turn helps them put matters in the proper perspective and explain issues to other Malaysians and also foreign students curious about the country's political developments.

The Leeds branch Umno Club adviser Azhali Baharun said Malaysian students in the UK were at times confused with various reports on Malaysia in the foreign media, but meetings with leaders from Malaysia had enabled them to obtain a clearer picture.

"This is the consensus of all Umno Clubs in the UK. We, therefore, welcome more visits from Malaysian leaders.

"One recent visitor to students at the university was Deputy Education Minister Datuk Abdul Aziz Shamsuddin. These meetings enable us to explain issues to students who ask us what is going on back home."

He said the meetings were informal in nature and students were encouraged to ask questions.

Azhali was speaking to Malaysian journalists on a tour of UK universities organised by the British Council.

University of Leeds liaison office head of international and schools David Baker said Malaysian students at UK universities were generally, however, more focused on their studies than the political goings-on back home.

"Many are members of societies at their respective universities, but the activities they are involved in are not political in nature. They join the Malaysia Singapore Society, for instance, which organises cultural activities and social get-togethers.

"Malaysian students realise that a large investment has been made on their studies and dabbling in politically-flavoured activities are a distraction.

"They are aware that their parents had spent a large sum of money to send them abroad for higher education, and those on scholarship realise the huge investment that had been made."

Meanwhile, Malaysian students who attended a talk by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad recently at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology described it as informative.

Many students from the neighbouring University of Manchester had also attended the talk.

"The hall swarmed with students," said Tan Chin Yen, 21, who is pursuing a BA (Econs) at the University of Manchester.

"The Prime Minister spoke on a number of issues, among them the country's political developments. Many students had also attended just to see Dr Mahathir in person."

Tan said Malaysian students in the UK kept in touch with the developments in the country, including that pertaining politics, but the majority considered their studies a bigger priority.

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