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Hamid-Al Azhar

GOV'T TIGHTENS AL AZHAR ENTRY SYSTEM FOR M'SIAN STUDENTS

By: Abdul Muin Abdul Majid

CAIRO, Jan 22 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian government will tighten the entry system for its students to the world-renowned Al Azhar University here as soon as possible to ensure high quality graduates who can contribute positively to nation building.

Religious advisor to the prime minister Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Othman said that this was a follow-up to the discussions here between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the university's head, Dr Mohammad Sayed Tantawi, Wednesday.

Speaking to Malaysian journalists covering Dr Mahathir's working visit to Egypt, Dr Abdul Hamid said that the prime minister asked the university authorities to give some attention to the problem of Malaysian students not concentrating on their studies due, among others, to instigations from political groups.

He said Dr Mahathir also raised the issue of how easy it was for private students from Malaysia to gain entry to the Al Azhar University despite not having the requisite qualifications.

"So, as a follow-up, we will tighten the (entry) system by making it compulsory for the students to go through the embassy," he said.

He said they would also be required to stay in Egypt as students for at least four years before they could get their degrees.

Of the 20 religious educational institutions in Malaysia, 14 were privately-run and recognised as universities by the Al Azhar University to the extent that some of their students could directly enter the final year here, he said.

Abdul Hamid said the government felt that such institutions had not reached a standard where their students could be recognised for entry to university.

What was more saddening was that students who flunked the final (fourth) year could repeat without any timeframe given, he said.

"So they stay here a long time and feel happy. The danger is when there are students with different political ideologies who instigate the others," he said.

He said that these students who were dissatisfied with the government would return to Malaysia and continue to instigate their students later on.

-- BERNAMA

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