

Varsity places: Long-term solution needed, says Abdullah

'Let more become doctors'

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From Hardev Kaur in Tokyo

OW that the 128 top students are ing to be given places to study edicine, the Government has to ont a bigger problem: Ensuring that ore people can become doctors in ture.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdul h Ahmad Badawi said there must a solution to the shortage of places study medicine in Malaysia. He suggested that medical faculties expanded and the Higher Edu-

cation Ministry consider hiring doc- tors to lecture in medical faculties on contract.

After lengthy discussions on Wednesday, the Cabinet approved several steps to help the 128 students study medicine in either public uni- versities or private colleges.

It also decided to offer loans to students who obtained a Cumulative Grade Point Average of 4.0.

Abdullah hoped the Cabinet de- cision would be accepted by all.

"When the placement of students is

made, don't create problems about the placements," he said before leav- ing for home after a one-day visit to Tokyo. "It's not easy to take into

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account every individual and every parent. I hope the students and par- ents will accept the places offered."

Abdullah said sending students to study medicine overseas was not the answer, as universities in India and

other countries imposed tight quotas on foreign students in medical fac- ulties.

Earlier, Abdullah delivered the keynote address at the 10th inter- national conference on "The Future of Asia" organised by Nikkei. He also held discussions with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and met former Japanese Foreign Minister Dr Taro Nakayama.

On his meeting with Koizumi, Ab- dullah said Japan agreed with Malaysia that the United Nations

should be given a meaningful role in seeking a solution to the problems in Iraq and Palestine.

Koizumi was told powers given to the Iraqi transitional government "must be meaningful to the people of Iraq".

The two leaders also discussed bi- lateral issues, including the proposed Technology University to be set up in Malaysia. Abdullah said KL was com- mitted to the project but noted that the cost of construction had to be within the country's means.