

**Minister cites 'many reasons' for pulling MARA sponsorship for Taylor's students after #Merah169**

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**Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said MARA would be terminating its sponsorship for the next intake of students to Taylor's University. — File pic**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 21 — Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) will be terminating its sponsorship for the next intake of students to Taylor's University, minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said today.

According to *The Star Online*, the minister did not offer further details, merely saying there were "many reasons" for such a decision, which comes just days after the university terminated the services of a bus operator that used its logo when ferrying protesters to the #Merah169 rally.

"There are many reasons," he said, when asked whether this was in response to the private university terminating the services of bus operator Wawasan Sutera.

The *Star Online* report also said that a statement allegedly made by Ismail Sabri ordering the MARA director-general to terminate the sponsorship of students from the university went viral on social media.

The minister, however, said that he did not issue such a statement.

"I did not make such statement, it was discussed in the Telegram messaging group with Umno division chiefs," he was quoted as clarifying to the English news portal.

"But I would like to clarify that we will not terminate the sponsorship for existing students, as they could carry on with their studies.

"Only the next intake will be affected," he added.

Taylor's University has stated that the bus bearing its logo that was used to ferry protesters to the "red shirt" rally in the city on September 16 was done without its knowledge or approval.

Thousands of red-shirted people were bussed into the federal capital on Wednesday, which was also Malaysia Day, for the rally officially called "Himpunan Rakyat Bersatu" or the United People's Assembly, but which caused concern among traders in the city centre and ethnic Chinese business leaders.

The protest was also marred by sporadic outbreaks of racism, with one attendee recorded calling a reporter "Crazy Chinese pig", among other insults.

A pocket of rally participants led by Jamal also clashed with riot police in Petaling Street, forcing the authorities to fire water cannons to disperse the crowd.

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