

**Number Of Foreign Students In Malaysia Record 100 Per Cent Rise Since 2007 – Najib Bernama
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PUTRAJAYA, Sept 21 (Bernama) -- The number of international students in Malaysia has risen by more than 100 per cent over eight years ago, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said.

He said in 2007, there were 45,000 international students in Malaysia and the number had reached 106,000 so far, and expected to increase to 110,000 by the year-end.

"In this regard, I welcome the Higher Education Ministry's efforts to increase the number of international students to 200,000 by 2020, who were expected to contribute RM15 billion to the economy," he said at the 9th National Academic Awards (NAA), here, Monday night.

The text of his speech was read out by Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh.

Elaborating on the impact of international students on the country's economy, Najib, who is also Finance Minister, said each international student was spending a total RM46,000 per year, including tuition fees.

Najib said for married students who came to Malaysia with their family, it was estimated that each family spent as much as RM88,000 per year.

He said the higher education sector was expanding and expected to reach RM33 billion this year, covering operating as well as development expenditure.

The prime minister said apart from attracting international students to Malaysia, the government had also established research universities to spur the country's academic research.

At the same time, the government was committed to ensuring that all the five research universities, namely Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) would book a place in the top one per cent position, he said.

"On this premise, we can reduce the sending of Malaysian students abroad to further their studies for the PhD and save at least RM2 billion in monetary outflow for the 2007-2012 period alone," he said.

Touching on the NAA, Najib hoped that it would be a catalyst for an excellent academic culture, besides making Malaysia a source of educational reference for the Asian region and the world.

"This is important in our effort to be a developed high-income nation by 2020," he said.

Idris, in his speech, said throughout the years of organising the NAA, 49 academicians in various fields had been recognised as recipients.

"The recognition is based on their contributions not just for the benefit of their students and the higher education institutions, but also to Malaysian society.

"It is also the best platform to highlight the academia icons and role models," he said.

At the awards ceremony, Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Augustine Ong Soon Hock from USM was bestowed the Eminent National Academician Award, while Assoc Prof Fatimah from UTM and Assoc Prof Dr Raja Nor Safinas Raja Harun from Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris each received the Teaching Award - Arts and Social Science Cluster.

The other award recipients were Prof Dr Rahmah Noordin from USM (Innovation and Product Commercialisation), Assoc Prof Dr Lean Hooi Hooi, also from USM (Journal Publication - Arts and Social Science Field), Prof Dr Hany Mohd Ariffin from UM (Journal Publication - Science Field) and Assoc Prof Dr Lim Jit Kang from USM (Promising Academician).

The NAA was established specially to honour academia achievements at the highest level based on the academicians' contributions to the tertiary institutions in the areas of teaching, transfer and expansion of knowledge, discovery of new knowledge, and in writing and publishing.

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