

**Revive Special Course for Enrolment in Middle Eastern Universities - Ahmad Zahid
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GURUN, Sept 2 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has ordered that the special entry course for students taking religious studies in Middle Eastern universities, abolished 10 years ago, to be revived.

He said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom as minister in charge of Islamic affairs has been asked to discuss with the Education Ministry and the Higher Education Ministry to revive the course.

He said with the special course, religious courses students in the country need no longer take the transition classes at the middle-eastern universities, which is very costly.

"Students from madrasahs, religious schools or maahad tahfiz who want to further their studies in the Middle East especially at the Al-Azhar University can take this special course and the examinations conducted by the university.

"From there, they can go straight into the Al-Azhar University without taking the transition classes like what is happening now because the system (special course) was abolished," he told reporters after officiating the Jerai division Umno delegates conference here Friday.

Also present was Jamil Khir, who is also the head of the Jerai Umno division.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Umno Vice-President, said he himself would chair the committee on the study before its findings are presented to the Cabinet for approval.

He said if the special course was approved, the government would hold talks with the relevant countries to recognise it, and accept students into their universities.

He said an educational centre would be set up to conduct the course and coordinate entry examinations into the universities of choice.

Ahmad Zahid said he expected the special course to be implemented by next year.

Meanwhile, in his speech at the Umno delegates conference, Ahmad Zahid said every Umno division must have a combination of new and old leaders which would strengthen them and put Umno on a better footing to face the coming general election.

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