

Hope for 128

after MS / June 1 2004

Prime Minister holds solution to plight of top scorers

BY WONG SAI WAN

SHANGHAI: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has given a ray of hope to the 128 top scorers who failed to get places to study medicine at public universities, with a broad hint that he has found a solution to their plight.

He plans to reveal his solution after the Cabinet meeting tomorrow.

"I think we should support them and not deprive our brilliant children the opportunity to continue their education. That is very important.

"I have some ideas but I'm not ready to announce them yet," the Prime Minister told reporters here before leaving for home after a five-day visit to China yesterday.

"Let me discuss it. I'll make the announcement after the Cabinet meeting," he said when commenting on the 128 top scoring students in the STPM and matriculation examinations who had reportedly been denied places at the public universities that offered medical programmes.

They had all obtained the maximum cumulative grade point average of 4.0 to qualify for the places.

Of the 779 students selected to study medicine, 439 were Bumiputeras, 297 Chinese and 43 Indians.



BREATH-TAKING VIEW: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi viewing the city of Shanghai from the Pearl Oriental Tower on the last day of his five-day trip to China yesterday — Bernamapic

In Kuala Lumpur, **FOONG PEK YEE** reports Health Minister Datuk Dr Chua Soi Lek as welcoming Abdullah's stance.

"The Prime Minister's statement is very good news for the students and it shows the Government really understands

their aspirations," he said.

"This will definitely reinforce the confidence the people, particularly the youngsters, have placed on Abdullah's leadership," he said when asked to comment on the prospects of a solution.

MCA national education bureau chairman Tan Sri Dr Ting Chew Peh said the move to help the bright and deserving students was a pragmatic and far-sighted one.

MCA Youth national education bureau chairman Dr Wee

Ka Siong said Abdullah has given hope to the students.

"We are waiting for the good news from the Prime Minister this Wednesday," he said.

■ **Don't despair, students told**
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