

2-year freeze on private higher learning centres

CAP ON COLLEGES: 'Move to ensure quality education'

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THE Higher Education Ministry has imposed a two-year moratorium on the setting up of new private institutes of higher learning, effective from Friday.

Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Khaled Nordin said yesterday the freeze would not affect applications of private institutions that were already being processed, having its status upgraded, or international branch campuses that have top world rankings currently under construction.

"Such a move is necessary because we have many private universities and colleges in the country. Also, we want to ensure only quality education will be offered to students, as well as manage the rapid development of the higher education sector," he said during the ministry's new year mandate ceremony yesterday.

Until Nov 30 last year, there were 37 private universities, 20 private university colleges, 414 colleges and seven international branch campuses in the country.

Khaled also announced that the ministry would review the Private Higher Learning Institutions Act 1996.

He said the review was aimed at making the existing guidelines more holistic and help to further push the country's tertiary education sector to be on a par with those of developed countries.

"A committee (to review the act) has been formed and it will be chaired by Taylor's

University Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Hassan Said."

He said the committee would meet next month and added that the exercise was expected to be completed by the end of the year.

At the same time, the National Higher Education Strategic Plan, introduced in 2007, would be reviewed to add more new high-impact initiatives.

Khaled said the review of the strategic plan started this month and was expected to be completed by September.

"A committee will be formed to oversee the review and the members will comprise relevant stakeholders, including academicians and alumni members."

Khaled added that an announcement would be made in March to explain the details and get public feedback.

"The review will take into account improving and organising strategies in accordance with current and future needs through new high-impact initiatives that will benefit the students and the higher education sector."

Earlier, Khaled also announced that Universiti Islam Antarabangsa and Universiti

Utara Malaysia had been awarded autonomous status.

The two universities will now manage their own academic, administrative and financial matters.

Other universities which are autonomous are Universiti Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.



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Datuk Seri Mohd Khaled Nordin
higher education minister