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Education to remain strong pillar of M`sia-UK ties: Envoy

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LONDON: The education sector will continue to be one of the main pillars of relations between Malaysia and the United Kingdom (UK), said Malaysia's High Commissioner to the UK and Northern Ireland Datuk Zakri Jaafar.

He said Malaysia currently ranks as the eighth highest source of international students pursuing higher education in the UK, with a total of 13,005 students.

"At the same time, there are more than 50 schools and five UK universities operating in Malaysia."

He was speaking at a dinner with Malaysians in the UK hosted by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof at the Malaysian High Commission in London on Friday.

About 80 people, comprising students, representatives from GLCs and staff of the High Commission, attended the event.

Also present were Fadillah's wife Datin Seri Ruziah Mohd Tahir, Tenaga Nasional Berhad chief new energy officer Mohd Zarihi Mohd Hashim, Sarawak Energy Berhad Group CEO Datuk Sharbini Suhaili and delegates from the Energy Transition and Water Transformation Ministry.

Fadillah, who arrived from Turkiye on Wednesday for a three-day working visit, led the Malaysian delegation to the Future of Energy Security Summit held at Lancaster House.

Zakri said Malaysia and the UK have maintained close cooperation in the defence sector, particularly through the Five Power Defence Arrangements which include joint military exercises, defence industry collaboration, procurement and technology exchange.

He added that a total of 315,980 visitors from the UK visited Malaysia in 2024 compared with 272,297 in 2023 and 134,667 the year before, adding that the number is expected to rise this year following the resumption of British Airways flights to Kuala Lumpur.

Zakri said the working visit by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to the UK earlier this year is proof of the strong ties between both nations, not only on a bilateral basis but also through various fora held by Commonwealth, United Nations and others.

"These relations are further strengthened through the UK's participation as an Asean dialogue partner, and more recently, its accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, of which Malaysia is an existing member." – Bernama