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National-service

GERAKAN SUPPORTS INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL SERVICE

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 7 (Bernama) -- Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said today the party supported the idea of compulsory national service for all Malaysian youth.

"I know that a certain section of the people may not like it but if it is for a certain race, it can create resentment," he told reporters at the Gerakan Chinese New Year open house here.

Dr Lim, who is the Primary Industries Minister, said it was the right time to introduce national service as the wealth brought by rapid development could be misused by the youths.

The national service proposal emerged following Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's special meeting with religious representatives of government agencies recently to discuss the country's social ills.

Dr Lim said Gerakan had been calling for introduction of national service since the late 70s and early 80s.

The proposed national service did not necessarily mean a form of military service as perceived by some people, he added.

Dr Lim suggested the setting up a service corp for community projects, especially for rural areas, where youths would serve a short period of between three and six months.

"In that process, they should be given military training and drill but not the handling of weapons," he said.

A military form of training could instill discipline to make youth aware of the need to serve the country, therefore, creating a Malaysian race with good moral values by the year 2020 which will be respected by other countries in the world, he added.

He said the Gerakan Central Committee will review its previous suggestion and come out with new inputs for the government. -- BERNAMA

MSL LDB