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Umno-Winding-up (Najib)

MATRICULATION STUDENTS GIVEN SCHOLARSHIPS

KUALA LUMPUR, June 21 (Bernama) -- Nearly all the students doing the franchise matriculation programmes of public universities at private colleges will be sponsored by the government, Umno vice-president and Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today.

Only those who come from families earning more than RM80,000 a year would not qualify for the benefit which would be in the form of scholarships and not loans, he said.

The students would be sponsored by Mara through an additional allocation of RM101 million provided by the government recently, he said when winding up the debate on the last day of the Umno general assembly, here.

Najib said the franchise programme was an agenda to supplement the additional 7,484 places which the public universities were unable to provide.

"Without this franchise programme, only students obtaining an aggregate of less than 15 will be offered places for the matriculation courses. With the programme even those obtaining an aggregate of 27 are offered places," he said.

The performance in last year's Sijil Peperiksaan Malaysia (SPM) examination saw an unprecedented 66,220 students obtaining Grade One, which was more than the number obtaining Grade Two and Three.

On the placement of SPM holders in institutions of higher learning, Najib said that of the 31,564 bumiputera students in the science stream, 22,314 or 71 per cent succeeded in getting places in the matriculation, diploma and degree programmes, compared with 61 per cent last year.

The figure increased to 80 per cent if students who obtained places in Universiti Teknologi Petronas, Universiti Telekom, Universiti Tenaga and polytechnics are taken into account.

"This means that nearly all the bumiputera science students who obtained Grade One and Two have been placed at institutions of higher learning. Actually, this is ours and Umno's agenda," he said.

He also announced that 670 places for matriculation would be created in 10 religious secondary schools to accommodate the science students from these schools.

"In keeping with the party's struggle for the race, the Education Ministry has never treated lightly the entry of Islamic stream students to institutions of higher learning," he said.

Najib said the matriculation programme at religious secondary schools was part of the ministry's takeover of the matriculation programme which would be done in stages.

He said four matriculation centres had been planned for construction in Arau (Perlis), Kuala Pilah (Negeri Sembilan), Masjid Tanah (Melaka) and Pongsu Seribu Seberang Perai (Pulau Pinang). They could accommodate a total of 9,000 students.

Najib said the government also offered loans to 9,091 first-year students last year and 15,000 this year, involving an allocation of RM305 million.

On the call by Kelantan members for a university to be built in the state, Najib said it would be done if the Barisan Nasional (BN) got the mandate to form the state government in the next election.

"I want to say that from my discussion with the Kelantan Umno liaison

chief (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad), this aspiration can be fulfilled...and the decision of the Kelantan Umno liaison chief is on the condition that the Barisan Nasional gets to form the government in Kelantan in the next election." he said.

-- BERNAMA

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