

'Merit system will ensure only the best get places'

SHAH ALAM, Thurs: The meritocracy system will ensure that only the best students enter universities and this will encourage the Malays to be more serious in their studies.

Deputy Education Minister Datuk Abdul Aziz Shamsuddin said Malay students have been complacent as a quota has been given to them for admission into universities.

"Since the government has been so lenient with them, they take the privilege for granted and become complacent," he told a press conference after officiating at the Excellent Students Award ceremony and the 2001 Students Exchange Programme between Malaysia and Japan at SMK Seksyen 9, near here today.

Under the Tokoname School International Exchange programme, eight students and two managers will be staying with host families for 14 days and students of SMK Seksyen 9 Shah Alam will visit Japan next year.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir

Mohamad said the entry requirements for Malay students to public universities will be raised from next year when the meritocracy system takes effect.

Abdul Aziz said the meritocracy system is a wake-up call for the Malays to make the best of the opportunities given.

Meanwhile, an academic from Universiti Putra Malaysia views the system as a "restructuring process" to divert the Malay students' interest from arts to science.

Dean of the Malaysian Gra-

duate School of Management at UPM, Assoc Prof Zainal Kidam, said without any drastic action, most Malay students will choose arts subjects.

"Implementing the meritocracy system will reduce the Malay students' monopoly in arts as they may find it tougher to secure places in the arts faculty," he said today.

Zainal said a drastic move has to be taken as the poor performance of Malay students has to be stemmed and efforts should begin from secondary school level.