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Meritocracy-Reaction

BUMI STUDENTS MUST WORK HARDER TO ENTER UNIVERSITY - ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 8 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Bumiputera students hoping to enter public universities must work harder from now on following the government's decision to raise the entry qualification.

"As the PM has said, we cannot have a system that retains mediocrity whereby even if you are not good, you are weak, you can still continue your studies.

"That's why the proposal was made to raise slightly the (entry) qualification for all faculties...to ensure that the students who are admitted are really qualified," he told reporters.

Abdullah earlier attended a closed-door briefing by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for Umno leaders on the proposed meritocracy system for entrance to public universities, at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Abdullah, who is Umno deputy president, said he believed that all the leaders present at the briefing were determined to do something to arrest the dropout problem among Bumiputera students.

Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein said he now understood that the proposed meritocracy system did not amount to absolute meritocracy and that it stressed more on the need for Malays to step up their academic achievement.

"Umno Youth's initial fear was on what meritocracy actually meant as stated by the PM. What the PM said just now (at the briefing) was based on deep awareness and feelings of sadness over the poor achievements of our children.

"Personally, I am satisfied with the explanation given. Umno Youth gives an assurance that we will try our best to ensure that the responsibility (to help raise the achievements of Malay students) is discharged.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said before today's explanation by Dr Mahathir, many were unclear about the meritocracy policy the government wished to implement.

"Umno leaders at the division and branch levels should go down the ground to explain so that the government's noble intention is not misunderstood or politicised by anybody," he said.

Deputy Kelantan Umno chief Datuk Annuar Musa said everyone must join in the efforts to improve the performance of Malay students.

He said the students must be made to realise that they should not expect everything to come easily for them.

"With the explanation by the PM, it is clear that meritocracy is not what many people thought it was. It stresses more on the objective of making Malay students become aware that they must work hard and not hope for other privileges," he said.

He said the meritocracy policy as determined by Dr Mahathir was very positive, and should be accepted by all Umno leaders and members.

Malaysian Youth Council president Saifuddin Abdullah said youth associations throughout the country should reintroduce programmes like tuition classes, especially in rural areas, to help raise the academic achievements of Bumiputera students.

"At one time, many of the youth associations provided tuition classes, especially in the rural areas. These classes should be reintroduced and

stepped up to help raise the acadmic achivements of malay children," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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