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Gerakan-Merit

CONSIDER A MERIT SYSTEM BASED ON NEEDS AND CIRCUMSTANCES, SAYS GERAKAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 9 (Bernama) -- Gerakan today asked the government to also consider a merit system based on needs and circumstances for student intake in public universities.

"Students disadvantaged due to socio-economic factors, decreased accessibility to learning facilities and physical handicaps should be given special consideration, regardless of ethnic origin," said its vice-president, Datuk Dr S. Vijayarajam, in a statement issued here.

For instance, he said that bright students from the rural areas of Sabah and Sarawak must be assessed in a different light due to their remote location and generally lower income.

He said with this idea of gradually injecting the principles of meritocracy into the education system, there will be a definite improvement in the standard of graduates from all communities.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said student intake in public universities based on a modified merit system will begin next year.

Meanwhile, the opposition alliance Barisan Alternatif (BA) said that all students who achieve excellent results should be admitted to the institutions of higher learning irrespective of ethnic background.

Its Education Bureau chairman, Dr Syed Husin Ali, in a statement said that merit must be taken together, with the other equally important criterion, namely economic, social and educational background of the students.

Dr Syed, who is PRM president, said if merit is the only criterion used for university admission, then many students from poor families in backward areas will not be able to continue their studies.

On the other hand, Keadilan president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said that places in universities must be guaranteed for excellent students and also for Bumiputera students with good results there must be a quota system for students from poor families and those from rural areas.

-- BERNAMA

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