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'Rights of Malay students will be protected'

JOHOR BARU, Fri. - The rights of Malay students will be protected even if the Government introduces the merit-based system for all public universities next year.

They have been urged not to worry about the system and be influenced by an Opposition party's claims that Malay students will be marginalised if the system is introduced.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Education Ministry Datuk Dr Mahadzir Mohd Khir said Malay students should not to worry as they would have ample opportunities in public universities if they scored good results.

"Meritocracy is not meant to marginalise Bumiputera students but to prompt them to study hard and be well-prepared before they enter public universities.

"From now on, they have to compete via education excellence and abstain from relying on the quota system to gain entry into public universities.

"Any claim such as those from the opposition that the system is to marginalise the Malays is only an attempt to gain political mileage."

Mahadzir was speaking to reporters after launching the Bumiputera Academic Excellence Seminar 2001 in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia here today.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was quoted as having said the meritocracy policy would be implemented in stages without jeopardising the existing quota system.

On the readiness of the Ministry to produce more excellent Malay students, he said the Ministry had, among others, provided hostel facilities in both urban and rural schools.

"After Independence, the Government has put so much effort into developing education."

Meanwhile, Mahadzir said UTM is ready to implement the meritocracy policy once it gets the directive from the Government.

"There is no problem with UTM in implementing the policy," he said.

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