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Mahathir-Quota

FILLING OF BUMIPUTERA QUOTA IN VARSITIES BASED ON SITUATION

SINTOK, May 7 (Bernama) -- The quota on the intake of students into public universities may be relaxed for a particular year if the seats reserved for Bumiputeras are not all filled, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said this would enable the unfilled seats to be taken up by non-Bumiputera students.

He said while the 55:45 quota for Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras respectively would remain, it could be relaxed for a particular year if there were insufficient qualified Bumiputera students.

"This year, it was reported that there were unfilled university seats reserved for Bumiputeras. If this happens again next year, we will have a relook at the situation," he told reporters after a dialogue session with representatives of public university student councils at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) here.

Dr Mahathir said the facilities in each university were meant to cater to the needs of a particular number of students, therefore there should not be a shortfall in the number of students even if the Bumiputera quota was not filled.

"We must fill up all the places at the universities, otherwise it would be a waste as we will not be able to train (a sufficient number of) our students to become skilled workers," he said.

The Prime Minister said the government was willing to consider new applications from qualified Bumiputeras to fill this year's quota even if they had to be trained first.

Responding to a question, he said the government acknowledged that there were weaknesses among Bumiputera students, and that was why special provisions were given to them in certain fields.

He said if the weak were marginalised, they would be left further behind.

The special consideration for Bumiputeras in certain fields had been in practice since the country achieved independence, he said.

"We have special provisions for Bumiputeras because they had been discriminated against during the colonial period. To correct the situation, we need to take affirmative action," he said.

The dialogue was held in conjunction with the three-day convention of public university student councils which ended today.

The Prime Minister earlier made a brief stop at Napoh to attend a thanksgiving feast organised by the Kubang Pasu Umno division.

-- BERNAMA

MZM AO