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Mahathir-Quota

IT'S UP TO THE PEOPLE TO DECIDE ON QUOTA SYSTEM, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, May 6 (Bergambar) -- The government wants the people to decide whether to maintain the quota system for entry of Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera students into local public institutions of higher learning.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government would accept whatever decision was made by the people concerning the quota system.

"That (the quota system) is up to the people, if they choose to reject the quota system, we will do away with it. We do it for the people, if they feel that the government is implementing a bad policy, imposing the quota and we don't want the quota, then the government can abolish it," he said.

He said this to reporters after officiating the "Dinosaurs Alive" exhibition at the Summit USJ shopping complex, here today. Also present was his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

"But we will accept the people's choice (on the quota system), if they want something, they must accept and use it," said Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on the statement by Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob yesterday suggesting that any entry quota for Bumiputera students to public universities that were not filled up be given to qualified non-Bumiputeras.

This was in response to the statements by several students who scored straight A's in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination but were not accepted into degree programmes at local public universities while students with excellent results in the Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM) examination were not offered the course of their choice.

The Prime Minister said the Bumiputeras must accept the fact that if they were not keen to take up the opportunities given to them, then they had no right to prevent others from taking up these opportunities.

He said it was unfair to stop others from taking up these opportunities after the Bumiputeras themselves were not interested to take up the opportunities offered by the government.

"This is unfair, if (they) want to study, then do so. Don't study just to deprive others (from studying), that's not right," he said, adding that throughout the 43 years of independence, the government had provided various opportunities for Bumiputeras such as opening up more universities and so on.

Dr Mahathir said the Bumiputeras had been given the widest opportunity in education such as special courses for success.

"If they don't show any interest, then the opportunities should be given to others," the Prime Minister said.

The country would face a brain drain if education for non-Bumiputeras was restricted resulting in other countries wooing them for their capability, he said.

"We (Malaysia) will face a problem because the intelligent non-Bumiputera Malaysians would be wooed by other countries which were interested in their capability.

"Then there will be a brain drain if we prevent capable people from acquiring knowledge which would be beneficial to the country," he added.

-- BERNAMA

MHI ES AO