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## Opposition parties urged to help improve performance of students

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Opposition parties were today urged to help improve the academic performance of Malay students by contributing ideas rather than politicising the Government's proposal to base the university admission for students on qualification and merit.

Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein said the opposition parties should not politicise the issue but make determined efforts together with the Government to show their sincerity in wanting to overcome the problem.

"If they (the opposition parties) are sincere in wanting to help the Malays, don't politicise the meritocracy issue. Instead, work together with us to find ways to help improve the performance and achievements of the Malay students," he said after opening the Telekom Towerthon International Challenge 2001 at KL Tower here today.

"Presently, their performance has really declined and they are not able to compete with the other races. So if the opposition parties are really sincere in helping the Malays, please give us your suggestions on ways to overcome the problem."

Hishammuddin, who is also the Youth and Sports Minister, said the situation was serious as the performance of Malay students had declined and they needed education in order to compete in today's world.

Hishammuddin also explained the reason behind Umno Youth's reservation over the proposal stemmed from its fear that it would not work.

"Umno Youth did not object to the proposal but we feel it should be carefully looked into to ensure the Malay students will really do well," he said.

He said Umno Youth appreciated the concern of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad over the declining performance of Malay students.

It was reported earlier that Umno Youth had objected to the party's supreme council's proposal to implement meritocracy system for admission into local universities and had asked for the quota system to be retained.

Hishammuddin said Dr Mahathir, who is the Umno president, will be explaining the proposed implementation of the meritocracy system to party members on Wednesday.

Last month, the Government had proposed the meritocracy system to tackle the problem of Bumiputera students lagging behind in education.

If implemented, university entrance would be based on qualification and merit and not on racial quota.

On the fracas during the MCA Youth's annual general assembly last Friday, Hishammuddin who is also the Barisan Nasional Youth chairman said the fracas would not affect the spirit of Barisan Nasional.

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