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Mahathir-Quota

QUOTA NEEDED TO ACHIEVE BALANCE AT TERTIARY LEVEL - MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, May 21 (Bernama) -- The quota for Bumiputera students in public universities must be maintained to achieve a balance between the overall number of Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera students at the tertiary level, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the quota was needed to balance out the situation after taking into consideration the lower percentage of Bumiputera students in private local institutions of higher learning and in foreign colleges.

"We feel this question of quota should not be restricted to public universities alone. What is important is the overall number of Malay students at the tertiary level in relation to the population of the country.

"(The quota in) public universities is only used to balance out the situation outside these universities. This is because we don't have the authority (on student intake) in private institutions where non-Bumiputeras make up the majority," he told reporters after chairing an Umno Supreme Council meeting.

The Prime Minister said Bumiputera students made up less than 55 percent when the total number of Malaysian students in both public and private institutions as well overseas were taken into consideration.

"Even with the 55 percent quota (Bumiputera quota in public universities) the overall number of Bumiputeras is less than that of non-Bumiputeras," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said the party would conduct a survey on Malaysian students throughout the country and abroad to establish the actual number of Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera students at the tertiary level.

Today's meeting also noted with concern the decline in the percentage of male Malay students in public universities, said the Prime Minister.

He said last year girls made up 67 percent of the Malay students in public universities and this year the percentage went up to 70 percent.

Male students were found to be less inclined to carry on with their education as they did not focus on their studies and were involved in other activities that affected their academic performance, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Umno Supreme Council had decided that a special panel headed by the Education Minister be established to prepare a working paper on overcoming the problem concerning male students.

-- BERNAMA

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