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Lim-Unity

MAKE SEPT 16 NATIONAL UNITY DAY, SAYS GERAKAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 5 (Bernama) -- Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik today called for Sept 16 be made the National Unity Day or Malaysia Day as well as a public holiday to commemorate the vision of the Malaysian race.

He said this was to remind the future generations on the national unity forged by various races in the country.

"With the one resolve one nation spirit, we have achieved rapid economic growth and increasingly good international reputation especially among developing nations.

"However we cannot view that this is a certainty as threats to our country are many and dangerous," Dr Lim said in his speech at the opening of the 31st Gerakan National Convention here today.

He said issues like racial polarisation among students and religious extremists had threatened the social harmony enjoyed by the nation since achieving independence.

Dr Lim also called for the Education Ministry be restructured into two ministries -- one for higher education and knowledge economy and the other, for schools, vocational and technical training.

He said the restructuring was timely in view of the widening scope of education needs which required different focus.

There was also an urgent need to reduce the high dropout rate at the secondary school level as it could contribute to social problems, he said.

"To mitigate these problems, education syllabus and teaching methods can be made more interesting and useful for these students," he said.

He also stressed that the current national education system should emphasise more on problem-solving and thinking skills rather being examination oriented.

Dr Lim also said there was an urgent need for more scientists, experts and academicians to fill voids found in the education sector as well as research and development institutions.

In line with this, Gerakan planned to set up a virtual university for the creation of a knowledge-based society and promote affordable education not limited by space, time and distance, he said.

The convention was opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who is also the Barisan Nasional chairman. Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was also present.

-- BERNAMA

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