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Mahathir-Mara

MRSM FOR ALL RACES NOT SOMETHING NEW, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, June 1 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today opening the doors of Mara junior science colleges (MRSMs) to all races is not something new because there is already provision for it.

However, he did not know who had stopped the ruling allowing non-bumiputeras to study in the MRSMs, the prime minister told reporters after attending the wedding of a daughter of his bodyguard, Ismail Manaf, in Taman Puchong Intan, near here.

He was asked to comment on a news report that 10 per cent of the places in the MRSMs would be allocated to non-bumiputera students next year following a cabinet decision on the matter.

Dr Mahathir said: "Let them (non-bumiputera students) enter. It doesn't matter.

"For a long time we (government) had allowed it, (we) don't know who stopped it," he said.

He said what was being done now was to continue with what had been done since the establishment of the MRSMs in the 1970s to help rural students in the science stream.

There are 32 MRSMs, which are fully residential schools run by Mara, in the country with an annual intake of 3,000 to 4,000 students. Each college has an average of 750 students.

Asked about integration among the students, Dr Mahathir said he did not see any problem as many Malays now studied in the Chinese schools.

On the Vision School concept which had drawn opposition from some sections of the Chinese community, Dr Mahathir said it was only rejected by a group of extremists.

The Vision School concept which aims to house the Chinese, Tamil and national schools in one complex sharing common facilities like hall and canteen, was opposed by the "Dong Jiao Zong", which represents the boards and teachers associations of Chinese schools in the country.

At the wedding, Dr Mahathir and his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed, blessed the couple, Zalindawati Ismail, 25, and Mohamed Rizal Idris, 28, by sprinkling scented water on them. Both are employees of Arab Malaysian Bank Bhd.

-- BERNAMA

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