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Najib-Service

CHINESE ORGANISATIONS, ASSOCIATIONS APPROVE NATIONAL SERVICE

KUALA LUMPUR, July 4 (Bernama) -- Twenty six Chinese organisations and associations support the National Service programme but want minor details ironed out before its implementation next year.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said: "They not only support the programme but will also organise roadshows to explain to the (Chinese) community the merits of the programme."

Some 60 representatives from the various rganisations and associations, led by MCA President Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, attended a briefing at the Defence Ministry here today.

Speaking to reporters after the briefing, Najib said the group had also promised to provide feedback from the Chinese community about the programme to the government.

"They want details of the programme. They also want individual problems to be taken into consideration, like the disruption of studies," said Najib, outlining concerns raised during the briefing.

National Service, the brainchild of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is aimed at school-leavers who have completed their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examinations.

Its main aim is to instill a sense of patriotism among youths and bridge gaps between the various communities.

"They (the 26 organisations and associations) accept the aim of the programme but want the programme to have the right racial composition and this includes the trainers," Najib said.

He said the Chinese organisations and associations also wanted the government to ensure that there would not be any religious element in the programme and that it should not be too physical.

On another note, Najib said the government had picked six officers to coordinate the National Service programme but the main office-bearers had yet to be named.

Meanwhile, MCA President Ong said the meeting was very successful and the community leaders who attended it were convinced that National Service would benefit the youths.

"They feel very happy and positive after the meeting today. Things which were not clear have been made clear," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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