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MIC-Service

NAJIB TO BRIEF INDIAN NGOS ON NATIONAL SERVICE

KUALA LUMPUR, June 27 (Bernama) -- Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak will brief Indian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and youth organisations on the National Service programme soon, said MIC President Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu today.

He said that while the MIC, the largest Indian-based political party in the country, supported the National Service programme, it was important that Najib provided a clearer picture on the programme to the community.

"He has agreed to give a briefing on the National Service," he told reporters after the party's central working committee meeting at the MIC headquarters here.

He said the time and date for the briefing had yet to be decided and the MIC was waiting for the details from Najib.

The National Service programme, mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, will be implemented next year.

On government scholarships, Samy Vellu, who is also Works Minister, said the MIC was dissatisfied with the criteria used by the Public Service Department (PSD) for the purpose.

"We have students with 11 and 12 As but are not awarded the scholarships. We have asked these students to re-apply and appeal against the PSD's decision," he said.

He said the MIC felt that there should be a standard criteria to pick the best candidates for the scholarships.

"Many students are complaining. I have spoken to the PSD Director-General (Datuk Seri Ahmad Damanhuri) and he has helped out in some cases but we cannot be going on a case-to-case basis year in and year out," he said.

He also expressed disappointment that only one Indian candidate was given a place to study medicine in Universiti Malaya this year compared to 16 in the past.

"I brought the matter up with the Education Minister (Tan Sri Musa Mohamad) and he agreed to give five places but not in Universiti Malaya. We feel that the 16 places in the university should be revert to the Indian community," he said.

According to Samy Vellu, there are about 400 Indian students pursuing a course in medicine in Russia, 70 in Romania and 120 in Indonesia, each spending more than US\$50,000 (RM190,000).

"All of them did not get any help from anyone, except the MIC which provides them study grants. But there is another problem...the Education Ministry seems to change its mind according to its whims and fancies as to which medical college to recognise and not.

"The advice to parents is to check first if the university is recognised. We do not want to waste time and money sending our students there when the degree is not recognised," he said.

He said he would bring the matter up at the Cabinet meeting and in his meeting with Prime Minister and his deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

-- BERNAMA

SR AHH ABG