

'Some universities ignoring PM's Deepavali directives'
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Certain universities are ignoring the government's directive to give Indian students a longer break to celebrate Deepavali, said the Human Rights Party (HRP).

NONEHRP sec-gen P Uthayakumar (right) in an open letter to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today complained of the "year in and year out recurring problem" for Hindu students who fail to enjoy similar accommodations granted other holidays such as Hari Raya, Chinese New Year and Christmas.

According to him, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) was only exempting Indian students from lectures rather than giving an official break.

"This would cause the Indian students to miss their lectures for three days," said Uthayakumar.

"Apart from UKM, we are also receiving complaints from in particular Indian students studying in Unimas and UMS that lectures will be conducted as usual even on Deepavali day, which is not even a public holiday in Sarawak," he added.

Najib, he said, had at the launch of the 1Malaysia Indian Students Movement at University Malaya on July 27 announced that the government would direct universities to make provisions for the Hindu festive period.

NONEThe Ministry of the Higher Education followed up with a circular on Sept 15 to all public universities to reschedule classes and examinations to allow for a longer break for Indian students.

"In that circular, Indian students nationwide were promised a longer break from 25 to 28 October to celebrate Deepavali which falls on 26 Oct," said Uthayakumar.

He added that they have received complaints that universities are not implementing other provisions cited by Najib, such as a students' shuttle service to nearby Hindu temples for students and making available vegetarian food.

"Or is this part of 'the government policy was good but it's implementation was bad' political play gimmick?" said the HRP sec-gen.