

'Students in politics should not forget studies'

KUALA LUMPUR: Students involved in politics should not neglect their education as it is their core task to study, said MIC Youth head T. Mohan yesterday.

"Students can be members of political parties, but it is not advisable for them to hold positions which may disrupt their studies."

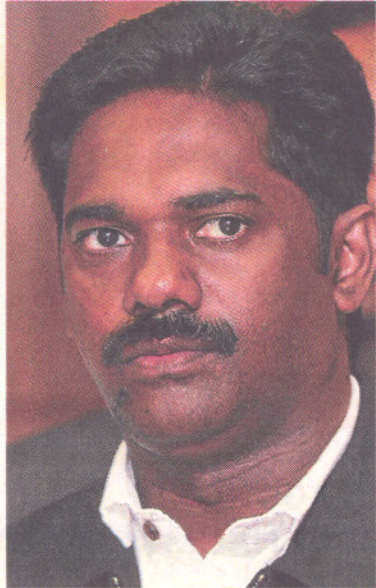
Mohan said amendments to Section 15 of the Universities and University Colleges Act (UUCA), which now allows students to be involved in politics, show the government's commitment to change according to society's needs.

"Like it or not, students are somehow involved in politics.

"With the advancement of technology and the influence of social media, politics have seeped into every individual's life," said Mohan when contacted.

On Monday, the government had tabled the amendments to UUCA at Parliament, allowing students from institutions of higher learning to become members of political parties.

The amendments to the three laws are the Universities and University



T. Mohan says amendments show the government's commitment to change

Colleges (Amendment) Act 2012, Private Higher Educational Institutions (Amendment) Act 2012 and Educational Institutions (Discipline) (Amendment) Act 2012.



Datuk Dr Radin Umar Radin Sohadi says the amendments are timely

The amendment bills came after a pledge made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak on Nov 24 last year to amend laws to allow students from institutions of higher

learning to be in political parties.

Mohan said the amendments will also result in creating a more liberal society.

He welcomed the restrictions imposed in the act, which include not bringing political activities to the campus and prohibition of students involved in politics from contesting in campus elections.

"There should be some form of guidelines to prevent students from concentrating too much on politics and not their studies."

Meanwhile, Universiti Putra Malaysia vice-chancellor Datuk Dr Radin Umar Radin Sohadi said the amendments were timely and the changes to UUCA had been done wisely.

"The move will allow the undergraduates to be critical thinkers and exercise their freedom of thought.

"The ruling that undergraduates are not allowed to spread their political beliefs in campus is clear enough and goes unspoken that the undergraduates must not cease from fulfilling their duties as students while being involved in politics."

Radin Umar said it was extremely important for students to be free of their political party beliefs in campus, to allow them to concentrate on their studies.

"They (undergraduates) must not forget that their studies are being subsidised using taxpayers' money and must, therefore, be careful in their actions with this new 'power' bestowed upon them."

Universiti Malaya Student Representative Council former secretary-general Hawari Zakaria, 24, said they had been fighting for the changes for some time.

"We are glad that the government had given this matter some serious thought."

He said that undergraduates of today were more mature and even more competitive than in yesteryear and would be able to make positive use of the new ruling.

"We are not obsessed with politics, but all we need is space to understand and be part of the political arena. We are thankful that this has been made possible," said Hawari, a third-year Islamic Education undergraduate.