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MAHATHIR

PETALING JAYA, JAN. 16 (BERNAMA)-- ACTS WHICH OBSTRUCT OR DISTRACT STUDENTS AND ACADEMICS FROM PURSUING THEIR PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING AND DOING RESEARCH CAN BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE NATION'S DEVELOPMENT, THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMED, SAID TODAY.

MALAYSIA, AT THIS STAGE IN HER DEVELOPMENT, COULD NOT AFFORD DISRUPTO IN HER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES, HE SAID.

+THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES CAN HAVE FUN AND GAMES AT THEIR UNIVERSITIES BUT HERE WE ARE VERY MUCH INCLINED TOWARDS INSISTING THAT UNIVERSITIES PLAY THEIR TRADITIONAL ROLES, I.C. THEY SHOULD TEACH AND DO RESEARCH.+

DR. MAHATHIR WAS OPENING THE 10TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING AND SEMINAR ON SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION HERE.

HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S ALLOCATION OF 24 PER CENT OF ITS BUDGET TO EDUCATION REFLECTED ITS FAITH IN EDUCATION AS A MEANS OF ACHIEVING DEVELOPMENT GOALS. --BERNAMA MORE 1025/MD

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DR. MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD TRIED TO OVERCOME THE SHORTAGE OF TEXTBOOKS BY COMMISSIONING THE WRITING AND TRANSLATION OF BOOKS AND DOING ITS OWN PUBLICATION.

+AND LATELY, WE HAVE DECIDED TO LOAN FREE TEXTBOOKS TO OUR STUDENTS. WITH SOME 2-1/2 MILLION CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS, MOST OF WHOM ARE POOR, THE FREE LOAN SCHEME WILL COST THE GOVERNMENT INITIALLY \$62 MILLION.+

HE ALSO SAID HIS MINISTRY WAS SUPPORTING EFFORTS BY UNIVERSITIES IN ACADEMIC PUBLICATION.

+FROM THIS YEAR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA A SUM OF \$35,000 HAS BEEN PROVIDED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC JOURNALS IN THE FACULTIES OF SCIENCE AND LAW.

+IF OTHER FACULTIES COME UP WITH CONCRETE PROPOSALS FOR PUBLISHING JOURNALS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS, THEN I AM SURE THE NECESSARY FINANCING WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE SINCE A REVOLVING FUND OF \$100,000 HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA. -- BERNAMA MORE 1028/YF

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→ DR. MAHATHIR SAID THE SCHEME WAS A CHALLENGE TO THE ACADEMICS TO PRODUCE SCHOLARLY PAPERS OF SATISFACTORY INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR A JOURNAL UNDER THEIR OWN FACULTY'S EDITORSHIP.

HE SAID THERE WOULD BE NO INTERFERENCE IN THE EDITING OF THESE JOURNALS AND IN THE CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA, ALL THE BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF EACH JOURNAL WOULD BE TAKEN CARE OF BY THE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA PRESS.

DR. MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THAT MALAYSIA WAS AMONG THE FOREMOST IN EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN REGIONAL SOLIDARITY.

HE SAID THE CONFERENCE WOULD FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE BONDS OF REGIONALISM BY BRINGING TOGETHER SCHOLARLY PUBLISHERS AND EDITORS IN THE REGION AND BY CREATING THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A GREATER FLOW OF REGIONALLY ORIENTATED ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS.

BESIDES REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SEVEN MEMBER COUNTRIES OF ASAHL, SCHOLARS AND EDITORS FROM CANADA AND AUSTRALIA ARE ATTENDING THE THREE-DAY SEMINAR. -- BERNAMA 1036/YF

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MAHATHIR 4 PETALING JAYA (REOPEN ITEM 12)

→ THE VICE CHANCELLOR OF UNIVERSITY MALAYA, PROF. UNGKU AZIZ, SAID ONE WAY OF ACHIEVING GREATER REGIONAL SOLIDARITY AND INTEGRITY ESPECIALLY IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION WAS TO SHOW MORE RESPECT AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO OUR SCHOLARS AND SCHOLARS IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES.

HE SAID: +SOUTHEAST ASIAN SCHOLARS, LIKE THE PROVERBIAL PROPHETS, ONLY SEEM TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GAIN RECOGNITION OUTSIDE THEIR OWN COUNTRIES, FREQUENTLY IN THE SO CALLED WESTERN AND EASTERN PORTIONS OF THIS WORLD+.

HE ADDED THAT IT WAS TO GIVE MORE RECOGNITION TO OUR SCHOLARS THAT ASAIHL HAD ESTABLISHED AN ANNUAL ASAIHL LECTURESHIP.

EVERY YEAR, ONE CANDIDATE FROM THE VARIOUS SCHOLARS CONSIDERED TO HAVE MADE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS OF KNOWLEDGE IN THEIR COUNTRIES, WAS CHOSEN TO DELIVER A LECTURE IN A MEMBER COUNTRY.

THE ASAIHL, WHOSE MEMBERS COMPRISE MORE THAN 40 UNIVERSITIES FROM MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE, THAILAND, INDONESIA, PHILIPPINES, VIETNAM AND HONGKONG, WAS RECOGNISED AS A NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION BY UNESCO LAST YEAR, HE SAID.

BESIDES HOLDING SEMINARS, THE ASAIHL ALSO FOSTERED THE EXCHANGE OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS AMONG ITS MEMBERS IN FURTHERANCE OF CULTURAL, COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING. --BERNAMA MORE 1305/LK

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MAHATHIR 5 PETALING JAYA (RE-OPEN ITEM 10)

→ PROF. UNGKU AZIZ SAID THE ASAIHL ACADEMIC EXCHANGE SCHEME PROVIDED FUNDS FOR SCHOLARS FROM MEMBER INSTITUTIONS TO VISIT AND TEACH IN UNIVERSITIES OF OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION. THE ASAIHL FELLOWSHIP SCHEME PROVIDED SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THEM TO MAKE SHORT TRIPS TO UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES.

HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT COUNTRIES IN THE REGION SHOULD ESTABLISH THEIR OWN REGIONAL JOURNALS WITH TRANSLATIONS IN THE MAIN LANGUAGES OF THE REGION. REGIONAL COOPERATION SHOULD TAKE PREDECENCE OVER NATIONAL AMBITION IN SUCH ENDEAVOURS.

ASAIHL, HE SAID, COULD ENCOURAGE THE EMERGENCE OF REGIONALLY ORIENTED SPECIALLIED JOURNALS BY OFFERING FINANCIAL AND OTHER INDUCEMENTS TO SEVERAL SOUTHEAST ASIAN LEARNED SOCIETIES AND ALSO BY ORGANISING SEMINARS TO BRING TOGETHER UNIVERSITY PUBLISHERS, EDITORS AND ADMINISTRATORS. --BERNAMA 1311/LK