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PENANG, APRIL 6 (BERNAMA) -- THE GOVERNMENT AIMS TO RESTRUCTURE SOCIETY AND ERADICATE POVERTY THROUGH EDUCATION, THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMED, SAID TODAY.

HE SAID MORE THAN THREE-QUARTERS OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS WERE FROM LOW-INCOME FAMILIES AND THIS SHOWED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM WAS ACHIEVING SUCCESS.

THE SUCCESS WAS ALSO DUE TO GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIPS, TEXT-BOOK LOANS, BUILDING OF SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS AND FREE EDUCATION UNTIL FORM ONE, HE ADDED.

SPEAKING AT THE OPENING OF A SEMINAR ORGANISED BY THE NATIONAL UNION OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION (NUTP) HERE DR. MAHATHIR SAID ALL THESE SHOWED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS HELPING THE POOR TO RAISE THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING THROUGH EDUCATION.

HOWEVER, HE SAID THERE WERE STILL SEVERAL PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY IN THE RURAL AREAS. HIS MINISTRY WAS AWARE THAT RURAL SCHOOLS FACED A SHORTAGE OF EQUIPMENT AND TEACHERS WHILE STUDENTS THERE WERE FACED WITH TRANSPORT DIFFICULTIES. -- BERNAMA MORE 1330/A1

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THIS CAUSED THE STUDENTS TO LACK BEHIND IN THEIR STUDIES BOTH AT SCHOOL AND AT HOME.

HE URGED PARTICIPANTS OF THE THREE-DAY SEMINAR TO FIND WAYS OF SOLVING THESE PROBLEMS.

ON THE GRIEVANCES OF TEACHERS WHO DO NOT WISH TO STAY LONG IN RURAL AREAS, DR. MAHATHIR HOPED THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM WITH MUTUAL AGREEMENTS WITH URBAN TEACHERS.

EARLIER, NUTP PRESIDENT HAJI AHMAD BIN ABDUL RAHMAN VOICED THE UNION'S DISSATISFACTION OVER THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION IN BRINGING FOREIGN TEACHERS TO SERVE HERE.

HE SUGGESTED THAT THE RECRUITMENT OF SUCH TEACHERS ON A CONTRACT BASIS BE STOPPED AND AN EXCHANGE PROGRAMME BE INTRODUCED INSTEAD. -- BERNAMA 1332/A1

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