

Mahathir on schools and the just society

Dr. Mahathir being welcomed by Tuan Haji Ahmad bin Abdul Rahman, president of the National Union of the Teaching Profession, on his arrival to open the seminar.

WE'RE MAKING SOME HEADWAY THROUGH EDUCATION, SEMINAR IS TOLD

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PENANG, Sunday.

THE Government's aim of restructuring society and eradicating poverty through education is achieving success, Education Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, said today.

"This is proved by the fact that more than three-quarters of the total number of students in higher institutions of learning, are from low-income families," he added.

He was opening a three-day seminar on national education organised by the National Union of Teaching Profession here.

Dr. Mahathir attributed the success to Government scholarships, the textbooks loan scheme, the building of schools in rural areas and free primary schooling.

He said the country was still facing problems in the field of educational development, especially in the rural areas.

"My Ministry is aware that schools in rural areas face a shortage of equipment and teachers, while pupils are plagued with transport problems.

"Sheer exhaustion alone has caused them to slack in their studies."

'Not happy'

On the grievances of

find ways to solve all the problems pertaining to education in the country.

The union president, Haji Ahmad Abdul Rahman urged the Government to stop employing foreign teachers on a contract basis.

Local talent

He said the Government should tap local talents while carrying out the national education policy.

"More attention should also be paid to suggestions and ideas of local experts who know the needs of the people.

"While we accept the concept of teacher-exchange with neighbouring countries, no foreign teachers should be employed here on contract basis."

He also called for equal distribution of education opportunities among the various communities.

"Towards this end, we are glad that Dr. Mahathir has promised that the Government will provide all facilities to uplift the education of bumiputras," he added.

"I am also aware that a lot of teachers are not happy to serve in the rural areas.

"This is something that cannot be avoided. However, I hope that teachers in the urban and rural areas will work out some sort of compromise among themselves, and have mutual transfers," he added.

He hoped that the seminar would be able to