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SENATE-UNIVERSITY

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KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 17 (BERNAMA) -- THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT DEVIATE FROM ITS INTENTION TO IMPLEMENT THE AMENDMENT TO THE UNIVERSITIES AND UNIVERSITY-COLLEGES ACT TO MAINTAIN STUDENT DISCIPLINE, EDUCATION MINISTER DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMED, SAID TODAY.

PRESENTING THE AMENDMENT BILL AT THE DEWAN NEGARA, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD STAND FIRM EVEN IF THERE WERE PRESSURES TO WITHDRAW THE AMENDMENT.

HE SAID THAT CERTAIN GROUPS WERE PLANNING TO OBTAIN SYMPATHY FROM OTHER COUNTRIES TO PRESSURE THE GOVERNMENT INTO DROPPING THE AMENDMENT.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID THE AMENDMENT WAS MADE IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION AND FOR ITS SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT.

AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE BILL PROHIBITS UNIVERSITY STUDENTS OR STUDENT BODIES FROM BECOMING MEMBERS OR BEING ASSOCIATED WITH ANY ORGANISATION, TRADE UNION OR POLITICAL PARTY EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED FOR UNDER THE UNIVERSITY'S CONSTITUTION. --BERNAMA MORE 2015/MD

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THE AMENDMENT ALSO PROHIBITS STUDENTS OR STUDENT ORGANISATIONS, OR GROUPS OF STUDENTS FROM EXPRESSING SUPPORT OR SYMPATHY OR OPPOSITION TO ANY POLITICAL PARTY, TRADE UNION, UNLAWFUL ORGANISATION, BODY OR GROUP OF PEOPLE EXCEPT WITH THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR.

IT ALSO PROVIDES FOR THE SUSPENSION OF STUDENTS FOUND GUILTY OF ANY CRIMINAL OFFENCE.

OTHER PROVISIONS DEAL WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF UNIVERSITIES.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN LACK OF DISCIPLINE IN THE CAMPUSES.

IT HAD EVEN REACHED THE STAGE WHERE STUDENTS TOOK OVER THE RUNNING OF UNIVERSITIES AND NORNINATED THEMSELVES AS VICE-CHANCELLORS AND DEANS. --BERNAMA MORE 2020/MD

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SOME STUDENTS HAD EVEN THREATENED THE VICE-CHANCELLOR THAT THEY WOULD CLOSE THE UNIVERSITY IF THEIR DEMANDS WERE NOT MET, HE ADDED.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT THIS UNHEALTHY DEVELOPMENT COULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE IN THE INTERESTS OF EDUCATION.

HE ALSO REFUTED ALLEGATIONS BY CERTAIN STUDENTS AND LECTURERS THAT THE AMENDMENT WOULD AFFECT ACADEMIC FREEDOM.

THE MINISTER SAID SOME STUDENTS HAD DELUSIONS OF THE CAMPUS BEING AN AREA DETACHED FROM THE COUNTRY WHERE EVEN CRIMINAL ACTS COULD BE COMMITTED UNCHECKED.

THIS WAS A NAIVE ATTITUDE BECAUSE IN NO UNIVERSITY WAS THIS RIGHT GRANTED, DR. MAHATHIR SAID. ACADEMIC FREEDOM MEANT ONLY FREEDOM TO LEARN AND NOT FREEDOM TO COMMIT CRIME. --BERNAMA MORE 2025/MD

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THE GOVERNMENT, HE STRESSED WAS GIVING STUDENTS THE FREEDOM TO LEARN ANYTHING THEY WANTED INCLUDING COMMUNISM AND MARXISM.

HOWEVER, THEY COULD ONLY LEARN ABOUT THESE THINGS AND NOT PUT THEM INTO PRACTICE AS THEY WERE AGAINST THE LAWS OF THE COUNTRY.

ON STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, DR. MAHATHIR SAID STUDENTS WERE BECOMING MORE DEMANDING AS THEY FELT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS AFRAID OF THEM BECAUSE IT HAD MET THEIR DEMANDS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE AS THIS WOULD THREATEN THE SECURITY OF THE NATION AND OBSTRUCT GOVERNMENT

EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE EDUCATIONAL BALANCE AMONG THE VARIOUS COMMUNITIES.

HE STRESSED THAT IF STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, SUCH AS THOSE WHICH OCCURED ON DEC. 3 LAST YEAR, WERE NOT CONTROLLED, DISTURBANCES AND CHAOS WOULD RESULT. --BERNAMA MORE 2040/MD

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DURING THE DEBATE, SENATOR DATUK NIK HASSAN NIK YAHAYA SAID STUDENTS COULD NOT BE BLAMED 100 PER CENT FOR THE BREAKDOWN IN DISCIPLINE AND THE DROP IN MORALS AT THE UNIVERSITIES.

ACCORDING TO HIM, STUDENTS WERE GIVEN THE FREEDOM TO ACT AS THE UNIVERSITIES ACT AT THAT TIME WAS JUST COPIED FROM WESTERN COUNTRIES.

HE SAID THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO MADE USE OF THE STUDENTS ON THEIR WAY UP TO BECOME +FAMOUS POLITICIANS.+ HE WANTED THIS MATTER TO BE CHECKED.

DATUK NIK HASSAN ALSO WANTED THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTROL THE MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF WHO WERE AGAINST THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW PROVISIONS.

SENATOR DASIMAH BASIR SAID SHE HAD CALLED FOR SUCH A PROVISION SINCE 1969.

SHE WANTED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW PROVISIONS TO BE CARRIED OUT IMPARTIALLY WITHOUT REGARD FOR THE CHILDREN OF MINISTERS OR OTHER IMPORTANT PEOPLE. --BERNAMA MORE 2050/MD

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SENATOR DR. LIM AH SITT SAID STUDENTS SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON THEIR STUDIES AND NOT TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN POLITICS WHICH WOULD AFFECT THEIR EDUCATION.

HE WANTED THE EDUCATION MINISTER TO HAVE REGULAR DIALOGUES WITH THE STUDENTS TO RESOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS.

HE FEARED THAT THE STUDENTS WOULD RESORT TO UNDERGROUND ACTIVITIES IF THERE WAS NO FREEDOM OF SPEECH.

DATO' RAJA NONG CHIK WANTED LAWS TO PREVENT INDIVIDUALS FROM MAKING USE OF STUDENTS.

HE REMINDED BUMIPUTRA STUDENTS THAT THEY WERE ABLE TO ENTER UNIVERSITIES BECAUSE OF UMNO'S EFFORTS. --BERNAMA MORE 2058/MD

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DATO' AHMAD ARSHAD CLAIMED THAT STUDENT LEADERS HAD GONE TO A NEIGHBOURING COUNTRY TO LEARN HOW DEMONSTRATIONS SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT.

THE STUDENT LEADERS, HE SAID, ALSO MADE USE OF THE MORNING PRAYERS AT THE NATIONAL MOSQUE TO PLAN THEIR STRATEGY.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PREVENT THE MCP AND ANTI-NATIONAL ELEMENTS FROM INFLUENCING THE STUDENTS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.

HE HOPED THAT THE AMENDMENT WOULD ALSO INCLUDE DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST STUDENTS WHO SPORTED LONG HAIR AND INDULGED IN DRUG TAKING.

HAJI ABDUL RAHIM MANAN URGED THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION TO CHECK ON THE ACTIVITIES OF CERTAIN LECTURERS WHOM HE CLAIMED WERE INFLUENCING THE STUDENTS WITH THEIR IDEOLOGIES.

HE SAID SUCH LECTURERS SHOULD BE ASKED TO RESIGN IF THEY WANTED TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

HAJJAH SALMAH SHEIKH HUSSAIN SAID WHILE STRENGTHENING THE UNIVERSITY LAWS THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO GIVE THE STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THEIR VIEWS AND IDEAS THROUGH FORUMS AND DIALOGUES WITH NATIONAL LEADERS.

SHE ALSO WANTED THAT ISLAMIC EDUCATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE SYLLABUS NOT ONLY AT PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LEVELS BUT ALSO IN THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNINGS. -- BERNAMA MORE 2103/A1

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SENATOR HAJI MOHAMED AMIN YAAKUB WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE NEW PROVISIONS WOULD PREVENT UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES FROM BEING USED AS LAUNCHING GROUNDS FOR ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES BY ANTI-NATIONAL ELEMENTS.

SENATOR DATUK SYED KECHIK SAID STUDENTS SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN ACTIVITIES SUCH AS THE RECENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN ORDER TO PRESENT THEIR VIEWS TO THE AUTHORITIES.

UNLIKE SOME COUNTRIES IN WHICH THE PEOPLE WERE OPPRESSED BY THE AUTHORITIES, THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA WERE GIVEN MANY OPPORTUNITIES AND FREEDOM NOT ONLY TO PRESENT THEIR VIEWS BUT ALSO TO CAPTURE THE GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY.

HE SAID THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE ACT WAS VERY NECESSARY AS THE GOVERNMENT SPENT MILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF PUBLIC MONEY EACH YEAR TO ENABLE THE STUDENTS TO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION.

HE SAID IF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WERE GIVEN TOO MUCH FREEDOM, THEY MIGHT ACT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO ENDANGER THE SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY AND DISRUPT THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES FOR THE PEOPLE. -- BERNAMA MORE 2056/LK

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SENATOR HAJI OTHMAN ABDULLAH URGED GOVERNMENT LEADERS TO GET CLOSER TO THE STUDENTS SO THAT THEY COULD GAIN THE SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE STUDENTS REGARDING GOVERNMENT PROJECTS.

HE CLAIMED THAT STUDENTS WERE USED BY CERTAIN POLITICIANS FOR THEIR OWN ENDS.

STUDENTS HAD ALSO GOT THE WRONG IMPRESSION THAT WITH ACADEMIC FREEDOM THEY WERE ALSO FREE FROM OTHER LAWS, SO MUCH SO THAT THEY COMMITTED OFFENCES SUCH AS DRIVING THEIR CARS OR RIDING SCOOTERS WITHOUT LICENCES AND BEING INVOLVED IN SCANDALS.

HE REMINDED STUDENTS THAT THEIR FREEDOM WAS ONLY FOR THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE AND THIS DID NOT EXEMPT THEM FROM THE LAWS OF THE COUNTRY. - BERNAMA MORE 2100/LK

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SENATOR KAMARUL ARIFFIN REGRETTED THAT STUDENTS HAD LET DOWN THE COUNTRY WHICH HAD PLACED ITS HOPES ON THEM.

HE SAID MALAYSIA AS A DEVELOPING COUNTRY NEEDED MANY LEADERS AND THE STUDENTS SHOULD LEARN SO THAT THEY WOULD BECOME GOOD LEADERS..

HE SAID THE ACT WAS SUITABLE FOR THE PRESENT BUT HE HOPED THAT SOME PROVISIONS IN IT WOULD BE CHANGED IN FUTURE.

DR. MAHATHIR WILL REPLY TO THE POINTS RAISED WHEN THE DEWAN RESUMES ITS SITTING TOMORROW AFTERNOON. - BERNAMA 2102/LK