

MAHATHIR - EDUCATION  
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BACHOK, APRIL 18 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER (DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THE OBJECTIVE OF THE COUNTRY'S EDUCATION SYSTEM IS TO CREATE A NATION OF PEOPLE WITH ALL-ROUND CAPABILITY.

AS SUCH IT SHOULD NOT BE BRANDED AS SECULAR, HE SAID WHEN OPENING A MOSQUE AT BADAK NEAR HERE.

HE ADDED THAT THE COUNTRY WOULD NOT BENEFIT FROM AN EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT WOULD ONLY PRODUCE EXPERTS ON RELIGION WHO WERE IGNORANT IN OTHER MATTERS.

AS THE COUNTRY NEEDED DOCTORS, ENGINEERS, ARCHITECTS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS, KNOWLEDGE IN SUCH FIELDS WAS EQUALLY IMPORTANT TO THE MUSLIMS, HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THERE WAS NO REASON FOR MUSLIMS NOT TO COOPERATE WITH OR EVEN OBTAIN THEIR KNOWLEDGE FROM NON-MUSLIMS AS LONG AS THEIR INTENTION WAS NOT TO DISRUPT THE UNITY OF THE UMMAH AND THE RELIGION. -- BERNAMA MORE 2232/MK

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID BASED ON SUCH REALISATION THE COUNTRY'S EDUCATION SYSTEM HAD BEEN FORMULATED TO INTRODUCE THE VARIOUS DISCIPLINES TO PUPILS EARLY.

THIS WOULD GRADUALLY ENABLE THEM TO MASTER A SPECIFIC FIELD OF STUDY UNTIL THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT WHAT WAS MORE SURPRISING WAS THAT THE VERY PEOPLE WHO HAD ALLEGED THAT THE EDUCATION SYSTEM WAS SECULAR WERE THE ONES WHO HAD SENT THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES BUILT BY THE GOVERNMENT.

EARLIER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR OPENED A \$300,000 SCHOOL IN SUNGAI PERIA, ABOUT 60 KM FROM KOTA BHARU.

IN HIS SPEECH HE SAID THE SETTING UP OF THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY IN MALAYSIA WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY SIMILAR UNIVERSITIES IN OTHER ISLAMIC COUNTRIES. -- BERNAMA MORE 2236/MK

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THE SETTING UP OF SUCH UNIVERSITIES WOULD ENABLE STUDENTS TO MASTER THE TYPE OF KNOWLEDGE THEY REQUIRED IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY, HE SAID.

AT PRESENT ABOUT HALF A MILLION OF STUDENTS FROM ISLAMIC COUNTRIES HAD TO GO TO WESTERN COUNTRIES TO GAIN A KNOWLEDGE IN SPECIFIC FIELDS, HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THIS HAD GIVEN RISE TO A LOT OF PROBLEMS BECAUSE THE STUDENTS WERE EXPOSED TO THE VARIOUS UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS OF THE WEST.

HE HOPED THAT INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITIES, INCLUDING THE PROPOSED UNIVERSITY IN MALAYSIA, WOULD ALSO BE OPEN TO NON-MUSLIM STUDENTS TO EXPOSE THEM TO ISLAMIC VALUES. -- BERNAMA 2240/MK