

R E615 AAE  
 MAHATHIR-UNEMPLOYED  
 (EMBARGO: FOR USE AFTER 6 P.M. TODAY, DEC 28)

KUALA LUMPUR, DEC 28 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY SAID UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES, PARTICULARLY MALAYS, ARE THEMSELVES TO BLAME FOR FAILING TO SECURE JOBS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR BECAUSE OF THEIR POOR COMMAND OF ENGLISH.

+ THAT IS THEIR CHOICE... THEY CAN'T BLAME ANYBODY,+ HE SAID IN A YEAR-END INTERVIEW WITH SENIOR EDITORS AT HIS OFFICE HERE.

+ WE HAVE GIVEN THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN, TO STUDY ENGLISH TO ACQUIRE A SKILL THAT IS USEFUL TO THEM, BUT THEY THINK THAT IT IS NOT WORTHWHILE, SO THEY CANNOT BLAME ANYBODY FOR THAT.+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE GOVERNMENT APART FROM ALLOCATING \$17 MILLION NEXT YEAR FOR THE TEMPORARY SERVICE SCHEME FOR UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES, WAS ALSO GETTING THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO HELP THEM. FOR EXAMPLE, SOME OF THE GRADUATES ARE WORKING WITH SHELL ON ITS DRILLING RIGS.

+BUT ONE OF THE THINGS THAT HURTS US IS THAT SOME OF THESE PEOPLE CONSIDER THAT THEY ARE THERE MERELY TO KILL TIME, NOT TO LEARN ANYTHING,+ HE SAID.

+ THEY WON'T LEARN, THEY WON'T DO ANYTHING, THEY ARE JUST WAITING FOR THE JOBS,+ HE ADDED. -- MORE

MAHATHIR-UNEMPLOYED 2 KUALA LUMPUR (EMBARGO)

+ AND I THINK \$400 (PAID TO EACH GRADUATE MONTHLY UNDER THE SCHEME) IS A BIG SUM OF MONEY IF YOU CONSIDER THAT THE AVERAGE WORKER GETS MUCH LESS THAN THAT, SO THE GOVERNMENT IS ACTUALLY DOING QUITE A LOT,+ THE PRIME MINISTER SAID.

TO A SUGGESTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PERHAPS GIVE UP THE IDEA OF JUST UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES AS IT WAS ALSO ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO TALK OF OTHER UNEMPLOYED SCHOOL LEAVERS, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID:

+TO BE VERY FRANK WITH YOU, THESE PEOPLE (UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES) HAVE A LOT OF CAPACITY TO DO A LOT OF DAMAGE IF THEY ARE NOT LOOKED AFTER...AND I WILL STOP AT THAT,+ HE ADDED.

REPLYING TO ANOTHER QUESTION THAT SOME OF THE MALAY UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES WHO CANNOT SPEAK ENGLISH ARE WELL-VERSED IN THE ISLAMIC TEACHINGS, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHI SAID BEING VERY GOOD IN THE RELIGION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY SHOULD NOT LEARN TO SPEAK ENGLISH.

+ THIS IS THE RESULT OF THOSE POLITICALLY-INCLINED PEOPLE WHO CAME AND TAUGHT ALL THE WRONG THINGS ABOUT ISLAM TO THEM.+

+ YOU SHOULD LEARN RELIGION, I'M NOT SAYING THAT YOU SHOULD NOT,+ HE SAID. -- MORE

MAHATHIR-UNEMPLOYED 3 KUALA LUMPUR-\$ (EMBARGO)

THE PRIME MINISTER WHO WAS IN SAUDI ARABIA RECENTLY SAID EVEN THE ARAB COUNTRIES ENCOURAGED THEIR PEOPLE TO ACQUIRE SKILLS TO EXPLOIT THEIR OIL RESOURCES WHICH THEY REGARD AS SOMETHING GIVEN BY GOD TO THEM.

+ THIS IS WHAT THE ARABS ARE SAYING. THE PEOPLE WHO ARE DISCOURAGING OTHERS FROM LEARNING SKILLS ARE NOT THE ARABS BUT THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE WEARING THE +JUBAH+ (ROBE),+ DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID.

+ THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO ASK THE GIRLS NOT TO STUDY MEDICINE BUT INSTEAD TO MARRY THEM. AND WE ARE NOT WILLING TO SAY ANYTHING AGAINST THEM BECAUSE THEY WEAR JUBAH,+ HE SAID.

+ THESE ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE INFLUENCING THE UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES. THEY GO ABROAD AND TELL THEIR STUDENTS...DON'T DO THIS, DON'T STUDY THIS,+ HE ADDED. -- BERNAMA