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MAHATHIR-STUDIES R'R'R'
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PULAU PINANG, FEB 20⁹⁰ (BERNAMA) -- CENTRES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA WILL EVENTUALLY BE PRIVATISED ALTHOUGH THEIR POLICIES MAY BE DECIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

IN MANY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES EDUCATION WAS HANDLED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR, HE TOLD REPORTERS AFTER OPENING THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TROPICAL OZONE AND ATMOSPHERIC CHANGE AT UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA HERE.

HE SAID, IN THE PAST, THE PRIVATE SECTOR WAS NOT CAPABLE OF PROVIDING FACILITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND IT WAS ONLY FAIR THAT THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDE SUCH FACILITIES.

+BUT, AFTER SOCIETY HAS ACHIEVED MORE PROGRESS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS THE CAPABILITY... IN FACT, EDUCATION SHOULD BE EXPANDED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR,+ HE SAID WHEN ASKED BY REPORTERS WHETHER CENTRES OF HIGHER EDUCATION WOULD BE PRIVATISED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

ON THE REPORTED DECLINE IN THE STANDARD OF ENGLISH AMONG UNDERGRADUATES, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THEY ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE THROUGH OTHER LANGUAGES APART FROM THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE.

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THE PRIME MINISTER SAID RELUCTANCE TO LEARN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE WAS A NARROW VIEW OF NATIONALISM AND IT WOULD PROVE TO BE A LOSS.

+IF ONE WANTS TO LEARN AND ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE, ONE SHOULD LEARN OTHER LANGUAGES AND AMONG THE LANGUAGES WIDELY USED IS ENGLISH,+ HE SAID.

FOR INSTANCE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID, MANY PEOPLE WERE INTERESTED IN LEARNING JAPANESE BECAUSE THE JAPANESE HAD PROGRESSED IN VARIOUS FIELDS.

AS TO WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WOULD GET BACK RETURNS ON THE MONEY SPENT ON STUDENTS IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IT DEPENDED ON THE STUDENTS THEMSELVES.

IF THE KNOWLEDGE THEY HAD ACQUIRED AT CENTRES OF HIGHER LEARNING DID NOT BENEFIT SOCIETY, THEY WERE THEN WASTING THE MONEY WHICH SOCIETY HAD CHANNELLED TO THEM THROUGH THE GOVERNMENT. -- BERNAMA
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