

CNS2181

U GE 18-02 00213 EA327

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Mahathir-university

(EMBARGO: FOR RELEASE AFTER 10pm, FEB 18)

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 18, (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight university staff and students should treat politics only as a side-line although many may think they are as qualified as anybody else to manage the politics of the nation.

They could come out and contest in the field of politics if they wanted to, he said.

+But if you say I have to remain a university staff in order to earn an income, at the same time I want to direct how the country should be run, then I think that would be something that is quite unacceptable+, he said in an interview over RTM's +Conversation with The Prime Minister+ programme tonight.

The Prime Minister was answering a question on apparently declining standard of local universities said to be because staff were, among other things, unhappy over the Universities Act or working conditions.

He said the Universities and University Colleges Act had nothing to do with academic skills and it was not a burden.

In fact it should contribute because then people would be able to focus on learning rather than extra-mural activities, he said. -- more

♥18/02/15-23MST

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Mahathir-university 2 Kuala Lumpur (Embargo)

The Prime Minister said although the government did not pay the university staff well, it did spend one billion dollars on local universities annually.

The government could not just increase their salaries without increasing salaries of the whole of the government service, he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir asked those who felt they could do better outside to try it out, but he reminded them of cases of government officers who left the government only to come back to him later asking for help.

He said once out of the government service, a government officer could not expect the privileges of a government servant and realised that the opportunities that seemed very clear while he was in the government were not there once he was outside.

The government would like people to concentrate on how much they could contribute in their area and not say that if they were in another area, they could do a better job than the people who were doing that job.

On career development, he said he believed that people coming out of universities should spend a lot of time learning the ropes and not take on the jobs which some of them expected. -- more

♥18/02/15-39MST

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Mahathir-university 3 Kuala Lumpur (Embargo)

He cited an example in Japan where university graduates began on the assembly line before they became executives.

This developed good work ethics and better understanding of the people who were going to work under them, he said.

However, Dr Mahathir said because of the demand and expectations of Malaysians, it had been very difficult to persuade them that they should begin from the bottom and rise.

He said this was of the reasons why the government stressed on more vocational subjects like living skills rather than pure academic to prepare them to live in a more industrialised environment.

+You have to know how to handle life in that kind of environment+, he added.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the government would expect the private sector to participate in such training programmes. -- more

♥18/02/15-48MST

CNS2212

U GE 18-02 00215 EA330

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Mahathir-university 4 Kuala Lumpur (Embargo)

He said the government was setting up more training institutions and vocational schools.

It was significant that products of these schools were snatched up by the industry whereas those coming out of the academic stream found it difficult to get jobs and were quite often misfits.

+So we are making these adjustments but it is not good enough and we hope that the private sector will recognise and appreciate this and cooperate with the government in these things,+ he said.

The Prime Minister said the Japanese method of training is to have everybody come in and work at the ground level and this caters for a much bigger number of people.

He said the country needed to have literally mass training and the Japanese approach would be much more appropriate since it did not depend on any particular person having become a master in a craft.

He also cited the German approach to training where they had master craftsmen and took in apprentices.

+Although the German way is also quite successful, it rather limits the amount of skills and knowledge that is being spread because you depend too much on individuals,+ he said. -- Bernama

♥18/02/15-55MST