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GRADUATES URGED TO REPAY DEBT TO SOCIETY

Mahathir-undergraduates

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ALOR SETAR, Dec 11 (Bernama) -- Undergraduates should realise that the opportunity for them to study could not have come about without the people's money and as such they should re-pay the debt by studying hard.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said although university students had to pay fees for their study the amount collected was not enough to pay for the entire duration of their course.

He was speaking at a dinner organised by Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) undergraduates here tonight in conjunction the university's undergraduate foster programme.

Under the programme, 45 USM undergraduates will be adopted as foster children by Pekan Rabu traders here and stay with their families for one week.

Present at the dinner were Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Osman Aroff and his wife, the Prime Minister's wife Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Ali, USM Vice-chancellor Datuk Haji Musa Mohamad and Pekan Rabu Cooperative chairman Haji Mustapha Jsmail. -- more

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Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said if undergraduates were aware of their debt, to society, he was confident they would not involve themselves in undesirable activities.

He said university students could organise more social welfare projects as a way of showing their appreciation to the public.

+Only by, studying hard and serving the people through social welfare projects will undergraduates not waste the money spent on them by the government,+ he said.

He said he was thankful that the undergraduates of today were unlike the ones of the 70s who liked to hold demonstrations purportedly to correct society and its administrators.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said if undergraduates wished to correct the administrators+ they had plenty of time to do so after they had graduated and entered the political arena. -- more

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The Prime Minister also took to task undergraduates who completed their studies but refused to pay back their government study loans.

+Sometimes it is not that they have no money but just that they are a bit late in paying,+ he said.

He said the government, aimed to create graduates who were responsible and who could help in making the country successful.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he regretted the fact that there were still many business opportunities in urban areas not being made use of by the Malays.

He said Bumiputeras should seize these opportunities as the government was willing to help them in various aspects including providing training.

He said the Bumiputeras were as capable as any other race in business as long as they were serious and did not aim to become rich overnight. --
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On Pekan Rabu where he sold goreng pi sang during his boyhood days, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the traders there should strive to develop the area into a shopping complex on par with major departmental stores in Kuala Lumpur.

Earlier, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Osman Aroff said the state government had set up a committee to study how conditions at Pekan Rahu could be improved.

He said a \$2 million project, to upgrade the area was among the programmes being considered. -- Bernama

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