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MAHATHIR TELLS MALSIAN STUDENTS JOBS AWAIT THEM AT HOME

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by Wan A.Hulaimi

LONDON, May 13<sup>93</sup> (Bernama) -- The pace of economic growth in Malaysia has meant that it is now easier for qualified graduates to find jobs when they return, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told Malaysian students here Tuesday.

He said it was important to realise that employment opportunities in Malaysia were in such abundance that migrant workers from neighbouring countries had to be employed because there were not enough Malaysians to take up all the jobs available.

+I am confident that when you return to Malaysia there will be job opportunities waiting for you there. The situation in Malaysia now is that even those who emigrated to other countries have now come back to work,+ he told the 300 students at a gathering at Malaysia Hall.

Dr Mahathir, who arrived here on Monday for a stopover enroute to Europe on a private visit, told the students, mostly post-graduates, that +the burning issue+ at home now was the PAS proposal to implement hudud (Islamic penal) law in Kelantan. -- more

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He said he suspected that even the Kelantan leaders did not have an inkling how it should be done. +What they know is that if they proposed its implementation, then we in the Federal government would warn them not to do it, or would object. So this time we let them go ahead with it,+ he added.

Dr Mahathir said there was uncertainty even among Kelantan leaders as to who should be subject to the law, with some proposing the exclusion of non-Muslims, others suggesting that it should embrace both Muslims and non-Muslims and others still saying that non-Muslims should be subject to their own laws.

There is great flexibility in Islam as regards the implementation of its laws, he added but there were those who choose to put Islam into disrepute and make non-Muslims resent the religion.

He said: +There are times when harsh laws are needed but in Malaysia where there is a multi-racial society it is difficult to implement such laws.

+If we apply them only to Muslims, then there will be many Muslims without hands or legs. These people are expected to compete with the non-Muslims in Malaysia. -- more

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+Surely their capacity to do so would be lessened, even more so than it is now.+

PAS in Kelantan was using the hudud law for political ends, he said, and by doing so they were putting Islam into disrepute.

He added that the reason why Malaysia is a peaceful country is because the communities live in harmony with each other and respect each other's religion.

On inter-communal relations, Dr Mahathir said that at one time Malaysia was attacked by other countries because of its New Economic Policy which they claimed discriminated against other races.

He cited the United States as an example of a country which used to criticise Malaysia's economic policies but which was now facing racial problems.

The United States used to have a policy of +affirmative action+ in favour of the blacks to improve their economic condition but this policy was ruled unconstitutional by the courts there, he added.

The result of this was an imbalance in the development of the races there, and that led to the racial riots there today, he said. -- more

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He added: +Actually, many come to Malaysia today to ask us how people of different races and religions have managed to live peacefully together. They come from South Africa and the United States to find out.

+So, the country which used to be the target of their criticisms is now a model for them. +It is not wrong therefore if we take a bit of pride in our achievements because in the end we can prove to them that our policies are more logical and more effective than theirs.+

In reply to a question from a student about the +conflict+ between the Rulers and the government, Dr Mahathir said that he belonged to the old school which held dear the system of monarchy but did not wish to see it become the focus of resentment by the younger generation because of abuses.

At one time, almost all countries in the world had a monarchy, he added but today most of them had discarded their Kings because they made themselves unpopular.

He said: +In the United Kingdom there is still a monarchy, but the monarch is subject to the Constitution; she is not involved in administration, she does not become a director of a company or become involved in business, although I admit that she is very rich. -- more

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+But I am convinced that if Queen Elizabeth involves herself in business; politics and so on, she will not remain there for long.

+In Malaysia, we have a constitutional monarchy, but our Constitution, which is modelled on the British Constitution, is written, unlike in Great Britain where the Constitution is unwritten but strictly followed.

+There is a provision in our Constitution which says that a legislation does not become law until it is signed by the King. This means that the final say is with the King, and if the King disagrees, then the law is not passed.

+This contradicts with the system of democracy that we practise where laws are determined by the people through their representatives.+

The two-hour meeting, which ended with a question and answer session, was also attended by the Malaysian High Commissioner in the United Kingdom Tan Sri Wan Sidek and Tun Daim Zainuddin.

On his arrival here on Monday, Dr Mahathir paid a courtesy call on British Prime Minister John Major at No. 10 Downing Street. The meeting was reported on the evening television news. -- Bernama

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