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Mahathir

WHEN DOCTORS MAKE BETTER POLITICIANS

SINGAPORE, Aug 1 (Bernama) -- Understanding human nature can be extremely helpful for politicians and doctors understand people better than most other professionals.

Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said his training as a doctor helped him "get a better perspective of life and what it all means".

"And, I think that training is good for a politician," he told the 30th Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine here today.

Dr Mahathir was guest speaker at the 13th Prof Gordon Arthur Ransome oration organised by the Academy of Medicine, Singapore. He was also conferred an Honorary Fellowship of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore.

Between doctors and lawyers, he said there was a great difference in terms of perception.

"A doctor studies a problem, the disease of the patient, in order to diagnose what it really is and to provide the best remedy," he added.

"A lawyer looks at a problem based on which side he is on."

Dr Mahathir said doctors wanted to get to the truth so they could provide a cure.

"They make mistakes of course, and as the cynics say, their victims end six feet down, whereas with a clever lawyer, their victims end six feet up," he said in a speech filled with anecdotes.

He said actors and comedians too had run for office and had succeeded with one actor becoming the President of a great country.

"In politics, a lot of people get a chance to act and I am sure actors act better," he added.

"If you think democracy is a joke, electing comedians would complement your views. In politics, there are many jokers."

Despite addressing a group of people from the medical faculty, the Prime Minister still managed to take a dig at journalists.

He said journalists knew more about how to run a country than "all the Presidents and Prime Ministers put together".

"Even a cub reporter is better equipped to rule a nation than any professional politician," he added.

"Without journalists to tell us what to do, we politicians would be utterly lost."

That was why, Dr Mahathir said, he always read the economic and political magazines before deciding "what not to do to my country".

"Malaysia will be safe if we do not do what the journalists are convinced we should do," he added.

On the presumption that politicians are corrupt, he said "mortality, the temporariness of life in this world, the absolute awareness that you cannot take it with you act as great deterrents, at least for me".

"More than other members of the human society, doctors understand death, the finality of it," said Dr Mahathir.

He said he had always felt that the temporary pleasures of this world were not really worth the opprobrium and detestation of the people of the future.

"I would rather forego filthy lucre made more so by being ill gotten in order to keep my name clean," he added. -- BERNAMA

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