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Mahathir-University

KELANTAN MAY HAVE AN UNIVERSITY - MAHATHIR

KOTA BAHARU, July 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight expressed confidence that Kelantan will have an university in future.

He said the Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) medical faculty in Kubang Kerian, near here, could serve as the nucleus for the growth of the new university.

Dr Mahathir said the government would like to set up universities in all states and not just in Selangor.

"But there are still some states that do not have a university like Negeri Sembilan and Melaka although they have other institutions," he said at a dinner with government officers in conjunction with his visit to Kelantan.

The prime minister said Malaysia initially felt that it need not have many universities as it could sent its students abroad.

"But the cost (of sending students overseas) kept increasing, so we then had twin-sharing where students can spend part of their time here before continuing their studies overseas at a lower cost," he said.

Dr Mahathir said a problem faced by the government in setting up universities was in getting lecturers in view of the relatively low salary offered.

He said if the lecturers taught in private universities they would probably earn two or three times more.

"It's not that (the government) has no money ...the physical development (of the university) is not a big problem, but what's the use if we don't have teachers to teach," he said.

Therefore, he said, the government had now changed its approach by encouraging the growth of private universities which could offer better salaries to lecturers.

Dr Mahathir said the government would not be able to offer higher salaries to lecturers without also raising the pay of all other government servants, something which it could not afford.

On the growing number of anti-establishment Malay intellectuals and students, he said this could be because they were born after independence and did not know of the difficulties faced in the pre-independence era.

"The intellectuals of this country are now ruled by the Malays and they feel secured," he said.

These people, he said, were influenced by Western propaganda on human rights and think they would remain safe even if the country was not ruled by the Malays

They had also been incited since young not to be grateful to the government, the prime minister said.

He said the government's decision not to reach out to these students so as not to disturb their studies might have been wrong.

This is because the opposition had during the time gone to see Malaysian students. even in places like the US, to influence them.

-- BERNAMA

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