

22/10/1999

PM: Teachers who instigate students are traitors (HL)

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JITRA, Thurs. - Teachers who hide behind their students while instigating them to hate the Government are cowards and traitors, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"They are irresponsible cowards hiding behind their profession," he said.

"I dare those in this group to openly declare their stand," he said, adding that such teachers must be brave enough to admit they were not carrying out their responsibilities.

Dr Mahathir said this in a hard-hitting speech at the joint ground breaking ceremony for four school projects undertaken by the Kedah Malay Chamber.

He added that they should stop spreading lies and concentrate on their jobs. The Government, he said, provided schools, trained teachers and paid them well to carry out their duties. Instead, they "quietly instigate students while at the same time draw their salaries from the Government."

Dr Mahathir said although most teachers in the country were responsible and carried out their duties well, there were those who condemned the Government and certain leaders.

Such teachers had political interests and they used their teaching hours to influence students to hate the Government.

"They teach our children to hate leaders by alleging that they (leaders) oppress the people and take all the nation's wealth to enrich themselves ... I for instance am accused of being a Prime Minister who fills my pockets with money," he said.

Dr Mahathir said if such allegations were true, it would be impossible for Malaysia to emerge as the most developed among developing countries in the world.

The Prime Minister said anti-Government teachers should work in other developing countries to realise the difference, especially in their living standards.

At the ground-breaking ceremony, held at the proposed construction site of Sekolah Menengah Paya Kemunting near here, were Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid and Kedah Malay chamber president Baharuddin Kasim.

The project to construct the four schools (the other three are Sekolah Menengah Pinang Tunggal, Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Lalang and Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Pasir Kecil) is worth RM36.9 million.

The four schools are part of a 40-school project worth over RM1 billion awarded to the Malaysian Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry by the Education Ministry.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, also hit out at Pas for including pre-schoolers and students in their hate campaign.

Touching on accusations of cronyism, the Prime Minister said it was an open secret that the Government helped Malays by giving them certain privileges.

"There is no need to apologise for this because it is the Government's responsibility to help the Bumiputeras ... every Malay is our crony and we will help them even if the world condemns us.

"If the Government doesn't help them, who else is going to (do so) ... We don't need outsiders telling us what to do or for them to tell us 'you are a good boy, good politician or the best finance minister'."

Dr Mahathir said he felt sad that certain quarters who benefited from

the Government policy were now making such accusations.

"I don't care if outsiders accuse us but now it is our own people who are making such accusations.

"These people are actually trying to sabotage efforts to help the Malays," he said.

Later, Dr Mahathir and wife, Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, spent about two hours with villagers at Felda Batu Lapan near here.

The couple took time off by having lunch with the people there after Dr Mahathir presented bicycles to 50 pupils.

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