

09 SEP 1999

Mahathir-Politics

STUDENTS SHOULDN'T GET INVOLVED IN POLITICS - DR M

BANGI, Sept 9 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today students need to follow political developments but should only get involved in politics after they had completing their studies and began working.

"Only after completing their studies should they get involved, directly or indirectly, in national politics to influence the way the country is administered," he said.

The prime minister told reporters this after holding a closed-door dialogue with students of public and private institutions of higher learning at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia here.

He said students spent a lot of money on their education and this should not go to waste.

Asked on the issues raised by students during the dialogue, Dr Mahathir said they touched on students' welfare, financial support and loans, the government's view on corruption and the country's administration system including political, economic and social matters.

Earlier Dr Mahathir received loud applause when he entered Dewan Canselor Tun Abdul Razak together with his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali and Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

There were cries of "Long Live Mahathir" from in and outside the hall and the prime minister was also applauded while delivering his speech.

Students were also seen lining up to shake hands with the prime minister and other dignitaries when they entered the hall and again as they left.

Asked if more such dialogue sessions would be held, Dr Mahathir there was a need to do that and students should come with an open mind and be prepared to hear the explanation provided.

He said similar explanation sessions must be arranged with other leaders because there existed a gap between the information that was being fed to the students and what was actually happening in the country.

Asked if the gap was due to his decision not to hold frequent meetings with the students, Dr Mahathir said that was only part of the reason.

He said he had stayed away from students as he had planned to retire last year.

But due to "certain reasons" he now has to try to foster a closer relationship with the students and the academic staff too.

Asked if today's session showed that students were no longer against the government, Dr Mahathir said not all students were anti-government but they were seen as such after a small group acted that way.

To a question on the mastering of English language by students, he said: "We should focus on English and not make any mistake about nationalism."

The prime minister said some people mistaken symbolic nationalism for real nationalism.

"Real nationalism means you must be prepared to do everything possible for your country. If it means learning English, learn English. If you need to learn Russian, learn Russian by all means," he said.

Asked if the students accepted his explanation on the Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim issue, he said: "I have no means of knowing but I had the opportunity to explain by giving examples."

-- BERNAMA

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