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Mahathir-Students

BE SENSITIVE TO OTHER RACES' CUSTOMS, CULTURES, STUDENTS TOLD

PUTRAJAYA, Nov 8 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today students must be instilled with the values to respect and be sensitive to the customs and cultures of other races in Malaysia right from their school days.

The prime minister said this could ensure the peace and development enjoyed by the country's multi-racial society and to avert racial tension and riots.

"Even if we are from different schools, we must find the opportunity to gather. All must be sensitive to our friends from other races... Malays must be sensitive to the customs of the Chinese and Indians and vice-versa," he said when speaking at the "Love the Nation Programme With The Prime Minister" at the Bestari Secondary School, here.

Dr Mahathir said students must learn to preserve the country's peace from their school days and live together with the other races because in the event of a civil unrest, it was impossible to develop the country.

He said there was continued peace in Malaysia because the people were sensitive towards the other races and refrained from doing things that would hurt the feelings of their friends from another race.

A total of 500 students from the Schools' Communication Club from Peninsular Malaysia attended the function.

Also present were Dr Mahathir's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad and Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob.

Dr Mahathir also said teachers were responsible for inculcating noble values among students so that they would become good citizens and wise leaders.

"That's why almost 30 per cent of the one million-odd civil servants are teachers. The government spent one-third of the country's revenue for education to equip students with knowledge," he said.

To become leaders of the country, students must have adequate knowledge, values and cultures suitable to the country's leadership, he said.

Dr Mahathir said students must also realise the importance of the love for the country as it was here they were born, grew up and would live their lives.

"We are a multi-racial country, we must be responsible to care for and develop our country," he said.

He also urged students to master Information Technology (IT) as it would be very useful in future and in helping a person to make wise decisions.

"It is for this reason the government was spending billions of ringgit to provide IT facilities, including this smart school. We must be thankful for the facilities we have and must take care of them," he said.

Later, at a question-and-answer session with the students, Dr Mahathir said students aspiring to become future leaders of this country must have high discipline and self-control especially in facing challenges of globalisation.

Replying to a question on lack of educational facilities in rural schools as compared to urban ones, Dr Mahathir said it was due to limited allocation.

Furthermore, student population in urban areas was bigger and the

government must ensure majority students benefited from the facilities provided, he said.

"We have 8,000 schools but we cannot convert all of them to smart schools. We'll start off with 90 schools first and hope that sometime in future, all schools in the country will be smart schools," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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