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PM: Resources go to where it's needed most

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PUTRAJAYA, Wed. - The Government's allocation of resources for education is concentrated in areas where it would bring the greatest benefit to the greatest number of students, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He dispelled allegations made by some quarters who accused the Government of spending most of its education budget to finance schools and facilities in urban areas.

Dr Mahathir explained that it was better to concentrate the Government's limited resources on selected schools in towns and cities where enrolment was high.

Furthermore, he said rural schoolchildren who show potential are assisted and encouraged to move to better facilities, where they can enjoy better facilities such as those in Smart Schools.

He said the eventual aim is to make every school a Smart School.

"We are not neglecting rural people," Dr Mahathir said in a dialogue session with participants of the "Love Your Country" programme at Sekolah Menengah Bestari Putrajaya, here.

Selected Form Four and Lower Six secondary school students from Selangor participated in the programme.

He was asked by a student why it seemed as if the Government was spending more on education in the urban areas instead of rural areas.

The Prime Minister said among all sectors, the Government allocated the biggest amount to education.

Of the one million civil servants, he said over 300,000 or over 30 per cent, were teachers.

"This shows how the Government is willing to spend over one third of the country's funds (for civil servants' salaries) on teachers, so that they can provide knowledge to our children."

Also present were Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad and Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob.

Earlier in his speech, Dr Mahathir said that despite realising the importance of education, students must also be aware of the need to preserve peace and harmony in Malaysia.

The Prime Minister summed up his advice to the younger generation: "I pray that you, all the races in Malaysia ...those who will become future leaders, (to) equip yourselves with enough knowledge so that the country (whose leadership) you inherit will be more developed and better than when you received it."

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