

'Teachers can help clear up confusion'

STAR 17 MAY 2001

MALACCA: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said educationists have a role to play in clearing up any confusion in society, especially those relating to the values to be upheld or otherwise.

"Today, the view being propagated is that we don't have to feel indebted and we also don't have to be thankful. What we get is rightly due to us. Suffice if we just thank God, the Almighty.

"We don't have to thank those who have given us something. Certainly, we don't have to remember their kindness. This view is causing confusion in society, including among teachers and potential teachers," he said when launching the national-level Teachers Day at the Dewan Negri here last night.

Also present were Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad, Chief Minister Datuk Wira Mohd Ali Rustam, Education Director-General Abdul Rafie Mahat and some 3,000 teachers from all over the country.

According to *Bernama*, the Prime Minister said that as trained educationists, teachers could clear the air on the values to be upheld to create a happy society.

"The same goes for values that could mould fine character among the future generation. With such fine character, the knowledge gained could be put to good use by generations to come," he said.

Consistent with the theme of the celebrations, "Upholding the Dignity of the Teaching Profession is Our Collective Responsibility," Dr Mahathir said society should place trust in teachers, especially in efforts to mould good character among schoolchildren, the country's adults of the future.

He said an unhealthy trend had begun to emerge in schools and educational institutions due to the stranglehold of negative influence on some teachers.

He added that these teachers ignored the national agenda because they were influenced by other agenda and in-

fluenced with allegations that the Government in power was improperly managed, while Muslim teachers claimed that the Government was un-Islamic.

"In the parliamentary democracy system, the government machinery must act professionally. If the government machinery does not act professionally, all governments will fail and countries cannot be properly managed," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the view that the government was un-Islamic and did not prioritise Islamic teachings should be rejected by all quarters because it was not true.

He said this matter should be given due attention by

teachers so that their contribution in the development of the future citizens would be more effective and positive.

Five retired teachers from different parts of Malaysia were accorded the *Tokoh Guru* awards for 2001 as part of the celebrations last night.

Sulaiman Saad from Kuala Pilah, Siti Aishah Ab Rahman from Kota Baru, Mohamed Saat Bongkek from Johor, Abang Hamdan Jas from Miri and Robert David from Seberang Perai received the awards from Dr Mahathir.

Sulaiman, 65, said the support and help from others and a humble attitude were needed in the world of teaching.

"Don't show off one's power if you want to succeed and al-

ways attract people with a sincere heart," he said.

Sulaiman had won the *Anugerah Perkhidmatan Cemerlang Negri Sembilan* in 1987, *Anugerah Perkhidmatan Cemerlang Kementerian Pendidikan* in 1988 and *Tokoh Guru Negri Sembilan* for 1997.

Born on Oct 13, 1936, he received his early education at Juasseh and graduated from University Malaya.

Siti Aishah, 56, said looking after the welfare of the students was just as important as teaching them subjects.

"Our own motivation towards success is important, besides using creative and innovative methods to help bring out the full potential of students," she added.