

Remain focused on studies, Mahathir tells students

IPOH, Sat: Students should prove their love for the country by remaining focused on their studies so as to enable them to contribute to the nation's growth and development in the future.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said by doing so, they would be able to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to defend their religion, race and the country.

Addressing some 5,000 school prefects from the state here today, he also urged students to contribute to the nation's growth and development instead of just benefiting from the work of others.

"There are certain groups who do not make any effort (to help develop the country) but still enjoy the

development and these groups will be the first to criticise the government for any shortcomings.

"Students should value the opportunity given to them by the government to study as students in certain countries do not enjoy such benefits," Mahathir added.

Citing the example of certain countries where girls are married off to rich husbands by their families as the easy way out, Mahathir said this is unlike the scenario here where females make up 60% of the number of university students.

Later at a press conference at the Sultan Azlan Shah airport, Mahathir said education takes up the biggest portion of the country's expenditure.

He also said the govern-

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ment plans to double the number of schools from the current 9,000 to provide for a single session system for both primary and secondary education.

"To date, we have built almost 600 and we are going for another 600," he said, adding that the rate of construction of these schools depends on the financial status of the country.

On the implementation of the meritocracy system, Mahathir said that it is normal for certain factions to oppose such a system.

"We have been living in comfort ... if someone is to take our pillows away, obviously we will get angry."

He said failure to implement such a system will result in the creation of "half-cooked" graduates.