

16 MAY 2001

Mahathir-teachers

EDUCATIONISTS CAN HELP CLEAR UP CONFUSION, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

MELAKA, May 16 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said educationists have a role to play in clearing up any confusion in society especially that 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 Negeri here, tonight.

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.

In this respect, 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 future generation. With such fine character, the knowledge gained could be put to good use by generation to come," he said.

Consistent with the theme of the celebrations, "Memartabatkan Profesion Keguruan Tanggungjawab Bersama" (Upholding Dignity of the Teacher Profession is Collective Responsibility), Dr Mahathir said the society should place trust in teachers especially in efforts to mould fine character among the 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 said these teachers ignored the national agenda because they were influenced with other agenda and influenced with allegations that the government in power was improperly managed while Muslim teachers claimed that the government was unIslamic.

"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.

He said the government machinery must support and implement the policies of the government of the day.

In this way, even if the government and government policies changed, the administrators and teachers could still contribute favourably to the country's administration, he said.

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

"On the other hand, those who reject the world so much so that Muslims cannot lead a proper life, much less perform their daily prayers, they are truly the ones who have betrayed Islam and the Muslims at large. Islam wants us to strike a balance between this world and the hereafter," he said.

Dr Mahathir 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.

He also touched on the teachers' ability to inculcate analytical skill among schoolchildren who would be the future leaders of the country.

The Prime Minister said teachers could also promote reading culture in society, besides inculcating constructive attitude and culture among the various communities.

He also touched on the need for knowledge workers, opportunities given to teachers to enhance their knowledge and the concept of functional intellectual community.

During the function, Dr Mahathir presented "Tokoh Guru Kebangsaan 2001" award to five former teachers, Mohamed Saat Bongkek (Johor), Abang Hamdan Abang Jas (Sarawak), Hajah Siti Aishah Ab. Rahman (Kelantan), Sulaiman Samad (Negeri Sembilan) and Robert David (Penang).

Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad in his speech urged teachers to give high commitment and observe the ethics of the profession.

This was because the dignity of a profession would be judged by the practice and attitude of those in the profession, he said.

"If all teachers hold strongly to and practice the code of ethics of their profession especially in their responsibility towards the students, parents, society and country, those in the same profession, then the dignity of the profession will on its own be highly looked upon by society," he said.

Musa also said this year RM148 million had been allocated to train and send 150,000 teachers to attend various short and long term courses as well as for higher level studies especially in critical subjects such as science, mathematics and English.

The ministry was also sensitive to the welfare of teachers and had introduced time-base promotion which had benefited 13,019 teachers, he said.

--BERNAMA
APG ZAI ABG