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Mahathir-Students

PRE-VARSITY AGREEMENT SHOULD NOT BE A PROBLEM, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KOTA KINABALU, July 30 (Bernama) -- The proposal for students to sign a pre-entry agreement with the government should not be viewed as a stumbling block for them to pursue university education, the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said it would only become a problem if the students concerned were not interested in studying in the first place.

"If they are interested to study, then signing the agreement is not a problem. If they come to the university and not to study, they wouldn't sign, then might as well do not come in...don't sign," he told a news conference here before departing for Kuala Lumpur at the end of his one-day visit to Sabah.

Dr Mahathir was responding to a question whether the proposal would cause apprehension among students intending to pursue further studies in local universities.

The prime minister himself announced this proposal on July 18 in a move to ensure students entering universities were serious in acquiring knowledge.

"The students are not in fear (of the proposal). I met many students and all they complained about is that they cannot study because people come and drag them to attend lectures that are not relevant to their studies," he said.

He said there were also students actually not interested in studying.

"They are not studying, they disturb other people who want to study and I don't see why they should get away with this...flouting the rules and the laws thinking that if we do anything to them the foreigners will condemn us," he said.

But the government, however, would rather be condemned than allow its people to be destroyed, or unprepared to manage the country after the current leaders were gone, Dr Mahathir said.

The prime minister was also asked on the rationale for the proposed amendments to the Universities and University Colleges Act which would, among other things, tighten rules governing undergraduates.

"In government universities the student pays very little, it is only one tenth of what we spent on them. So they don't have a sense of responsibility because it is not their money.

"But if they go to private universities, they have to pay RM60,000 to RM70,000 and if they waste their time, their parents will call them out," he said.

He said students should not let themselves to be influenced by certain groups out to make them hate the government.

Asked whether the groups also include foreigners, Dr Mahathir said foreigners as well as political parties in the country were involved in advocating hatred towards the government.

"Non-governmental organisations outside the country keep on telling the students that they must have student power, student rights...what student power? what student rights? The students have a right to study," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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