

29 JULY 2001

Mahathir-Students

STUDY HARD TO RETURN SOCIETY'S FAVOUR, STUDENTS TOLD

SEREMBAN, July 29 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight advised students, who received financial aid from various public funds, to concentrate on their studies as one way of returning their favour to society.

The prime minister said returning one's favour was a noble Malay culture which should be continued.

"I believe this will be maintained as our race's culture so that we will become a highly civilized race and attain success," he said when launching the Tunku Kurshiah College Students' Welfare Fund tonight.

Dr Mahathir hoped society-aided students would pay attention to their studies to value and appreciate the people's contribution and those who have helped them.

He said every time there was a fund-raising drive, many Malaysians and corporate figures come forward to donate.

This showed the sharing and caring attitude of Malaysians, he said.

"This is the nature of Malaysians, they are prepared to share their bounty and are always concerned over the plight of the unfortunate," he said.

He said the corporate citizens also donated generously as they realised that their wealth and success were achieved because the country was peaceful and they could do business without any disruptions.

Dr Mahathir also reminded students to be wary against a small group of students who could influence and poison their minds.

"These students are not that keen to study, that's their actual problem but unfortunately they will disturb other students who want to study. They will disturb by disrupting their thinking to the extent that they cannot concentrate on their studies," he said.

"I know education is something that needs peace of mind and a conducive environment.

"We can't study in a noisy situation and with a disturbed mind," he said.

Dr Mahathir also expressed sadness as there were still many poor people earning less than RM500 a month, preventing them from giving good education to their children.

"They know that education can help prevent their children from facing a similar fate like them. Nevertheless, they find that they have limited resources and are forced to rely on contributions from others," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government was aware of the importance of education in raising the people's income and as such, it was willing to spend a huge amount for education.

He said billions of ringgit were spent by the government so that all the qualified students would get to study until university level.

He said although the government spent a substantial amount, there were still students who could not meet their living expenses as they received very little money from their parents.

"That's the reason we have to set up various funds to provide additional assistance to them," he said.

Dr Mahathir believed such assistance would not be wasted by the students by not studying hard.

Dr Mahathir also said the various races in Malaysia should be able to compete among themselves before taking on people from other countries.

"If one race is left behind, it will be difficult for us to have close ties. If one race is very advance while another lag far behind, the latter will feel jealous of the former.

"This will also result in the society to be unstable. Therefore, we need to ensure all communities in Malaysia progressed so that there will not be a vast disparity among them," he said.

A total of RM444,000 was collected at the function.

-- BERNAMA

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