

25 AUG 2001

Mahathir-Meritocracy

THE MANY MALAY WOMAN UNDERGRADS PROVE THEY ARE SMART- DR M

IPOH, Aug 25 (Bernama) -- The big number of Malay woman undergraduates proves Malay children are smart and not merely depend on their special rights to gain admission to universities, the Prime Minister said today.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is convinced that Malay males could also obtain outstanding results to qualify to enter universities if they really focused on their studies.

"Concentrate on your studies to get high marks. It is natural for one to become smart, efficient and knowledgeable through constant revision," he told 5,000 School Prefects at Stadium Indera Mulia here.

Dr Mahathir said when the Government decided to select Malay students for university based on merit, many objected not realising that the relaxed entry requirements had made many of them complacent and not studious.

They felt that they need not work hard to enter university and this resulted in the production of half-baked graduates, the Prime Minister said.

"Many Malay girls are entering university, this shows they study hard. I believe Malay males are no less intelligent than females," he added.

Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali and Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad were also present.

Dr Mahathir said it would be useless if a student who did not study and equip himself with the abilities to defend the nation to claim that he was a champion of the Malay race, Islam and the country.

"And so we now stress on meritocracy.....there is still a long time before the examination and so study hard to get better results," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he was embarrassed when people mentioned that Malay students could not compete with other races and had asked that qualifications be eased to enable them to enter university.

The Prime Minister said there was still the opportunity for them to work hard and qualify to enter university without the entry requirements being lowered for them.

"If you really love the nation and are patriotic, study hard from now on .....it is no use enjoying from the efforts of others, work hard yourself," he added.

The Prime Minister hoped that the student leaders at today's gathering would go forward with renewed determination to acquire knowledge and take over the leadership of the country when the time came.

He said 44 years of independence was not a long period when compared to the 450 years the country had been under the rule of various colonial powers.

Dr Mahathir said the present independence and freedom could not be guaranteed forever as there were various efforts by foreign powers to colonise this country once more.

He said Malaysia was more developed now than before independence and also when compared with other countries which had been independent over the same period of time but not many young people in this country went through the bitter experience during colonial rule.

"When under colonial rule, we were humiliated and looked down upon and restricted from achieving progress. Today all Malaysian children had the opportunity for higher education," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government was providing the best education

facilities in nearly all parts of the country and some viewed this as something normal.

He said some countries became independent at about the same as Malaysia but did not have any such education facilities.

He said Malaysia did not discriminate against women in the field of education as could be seen from the fact that more than 60 per cent of the university student population in the country comprised women.

The Prime Minister advised male students to study hard and narrow the present gap.

He said Malaysia needed educated people particularly engineers, scientists, architects and accountants to spur economic growth and realise Vision 2020.

-- BERNAMA

AR KAY AAM