

01 SEP 2001

Mahathir-Malays

TIME FOR POLEMICS IS OVER, GO FOR EXCELLENCE NOW, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 1 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it is time for all Malays to act in unison and strive to make Malay students attain scholastic excellence.

"The time for polemics is over," the Prime Minister said when opening the inaugural congress on Malay education at the Putra World Trade Centre here today.

The two-day congress is organised by the Peninsular Malaysia Malay Teachers Union and a body calling itself the Group of Concerned Malays.

Dr Mahathir reminded teachers of their duty to provide every encouragement to Malay students and not to dispirit them by claiming that certain disciplines of knowledge were secular and would not bring divine rewards.

"Malay boys or girls are not born stupid. They are equally smart as their peers from the other races. But it is impossible for them to achieve excellence in fields that they do not bother to study," he said.

He said that with adequate encouragement and the right spirit Malay students would have the zeal to acquire scientific, technical and other knowledge with outstanding results.

While the government itself have thought of various plans to improve the lot of the Malays education-wise, its efforts would be futile without support from the Malay community itself.

Dr Mahathir urged Muslims, including the religious scholars among them, to genuinely disseminate what Islam teaches about acquiring knowledge and oppose views that interpret mastery of knowledge only as a secular or worldly pursuit.

"Let us not interpret acquiring knowledge as secular and a worldly pursuit as it is actually closely linked to the after life," the prime minister said.

He said it was crucial to impress on Malays that having good grasp of knowledge not directly Islam-related was equally vital for protecting Islam itself.

This is besides equipping the Malays with strong religious basics so that their faith in Islam and Islamic cultures remain sustainable and not easily undermined by decadent influences, he said.

"We have to develop an inner spiritual wall in the hearts of the Malays that is able to withstand any infiltration of sins and filth," Dr Mahathir added.

-- BERNAMA

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