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Mahathir-Students

UNDERGRADUATES REMINDED NOT TO DESTROY NATION BY DEMONSTRATING

KUALA LUMPUR, July 1 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged the undergraduates not to destroy the nation with acts like street demonstrations and rioting.

The prime minister said such acts would only be to their own detriment when they completed their studies because a ruined country would not be able to guarantee them job opportunities and a better life.

"We must protect what we are going to take over... not act in such a way as to destroy what we will inherit," he said when closing the symposium on "Reaffirming the Idealism of Undergraduates in the New Millennium" at Universiti Malaya here.

The two-day symposium was attended by about 2,000 student leaders from all the public universities in the country.

Dr Mahathir said undergraduates must always remember their responsibility to acquire knowledge for themselves, their families, the society, religion and country and not act as if they did not know how to use the universities.

"If we don't understand the objective, we may do something that will block our attaining the goal. We may have destroyed the road or bridge to our goal and not reach that goal," he said.

He said the recent actions of some local university students showed that they had lost their original goal of going to the university and had instead gone there for training in unrelated fields like "how to burn down a building".

Earlier, he expressed sadness over the fire at the Universiti Malaya Dewan Tunku Canselor (DTC) on Friday because the country had lost an historic landmark.

The symposium was originally scheduled to be held at the DTC but had to be shifted to the Perdanasiswa Complex Auditorium at the last minute because of the fire which some parties suspect to be an act of arson to sabotage the function.

The prime minister urged the undergraduates to learn from what happened in a neighbouring country where the students overthrew the administration but did not gain anything.

Dr Mahathir stressed the need for undergraduates to adopt a good approach to achieve their objective and not follow the saying that the ends justify the means.

If they wanted to change the government, they should use their right to vote in the general election every five years because the ballot was the ultimate right of the people.

"That is a smarter way than destroying everything around us. We'll have nothing left," he said.

He said that during World War Two the Germans wanted to carve an empire that would last 1,000 years and one never seen before in the history of mankind but they failed because of the means they adopted to achieve the end.

They were greedy and in the end they lost everything, he said.

However, after the war, the Germans and their allies used a good method without violence to rehabilitate their country by developing its economy until it emerged as a world economic power, he said.

Today, they had attained their goal without resorting to violence like in the old days, he added.

Dr Mahathir, however, stressed that rebuilding a ruined nation ruined would take a longer time than continuing with the development that was already in place and as such, the undergraduates should protect the country so that its heritage could continue to be developed.

The undergraduates, he said, must equip themselves with knowledge and efficiency to take over the government from the old generation and continue developing it.

Then they could implement whatever they felt had not been implemented by the old generation, he added.

Dr Mahathir believed that when the young generation took over the administration of the country they would face the same problems in society like today.

He said it did not require a university education to hold street demonstrations because "even idiots can do it."

"We come to the university because we have higher potential than people who run riot in the streets," he added.

-- BERNAMA

AFY ZS JK