

23/01/2002

PM: Apprenticeship chance to gain experience

BANGI, Tues. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said graduates, including law students, should view apprenticeship as an opportunity to gain experience.

Alluding to the on-going controversy on the necessity for law students to chamber, the Prime Minister said while some had labelled it "cheap labour" and of not being paid for work done, he felt the experience gained was important.

"The training is good for you. Maybe you should be paid a small allowance," he said.

Speaking at the launch of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Career Day at its main campus here, Dr Mahathir said apprenticeship would allow one to learn the nitty-gritty in their profession.

He said one might be armed with various degrees but the qualification was not a guarantee that they would excel in their profession.

"While in university, we learn many things. But this is not the end because we need to familiarise ourselves with the outside world, the working world."

Recalling his days as a houseman, Dr Mahathir said he gained invaluable experience during the one-year stint.

"The experience obtained was far more valuable than the RM400 allowance paid. If we want to give a value, I think I should pay for the experience obtained."

Relating a recent incident which took place at a Japanese restaurant he had taken his wife and child for dinner, Dr Mahathir said he came to know that a Malay waiter serving him had a diploma in business management.

"I asked him what he was doing working as a waiter. He said he was looking for experience and that he needed to understand the working environment. His attitude is laudable.

"We must be aware that we cannot become the manager or boss straightaway upon completing our studies."

Dr Mahathir said graduates must also be willing to work in areas other than the field they graduated in, especially when jobs were scarce.

The Prime Minister also advised students to learn to adapt to the working world, which was a different environment altogether from university life.

While public universities were dominated by Bumiputera students and academics, the environment is different outside, he said.

"When students start working, they will find that they have to work with other races, especially those employed in the private sector. They must be able to adapt, otherwise they cannot work.

"They may feel discriminated against or ill-treated because they are of a different race from their employers."

He said the same applied for students of private higher educational institutions who were pre-dominantly made up of non-Bumiputeras.

Dr Mahathir also reminded students not to think only of getting high pay when they start working.

"What is important is job satisfaction. If one thinks only of getting high pay, one will never be satisfied.

"Even when their pay is increased, their satisfaction will only be temporary. Before long they will start clamouring for another raise."

"The real satisfaction is in seeing the fruits of our labour, like the

success in inventing a better product."  
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