

09 MAR 2002

Mahathir-Sahoca

DR MAHATHIR MEETS FELLOW OLD BOYS

PUTRAJAYA, March 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali took time-off their busy schedule to spend more than two-and-a-half hours with Sultan Abdul Hamid Old Collegians Association (Sahoca) members at Seri Perdana, here today.

About 400 former students, their spouses and children attended the get together function of the association in which Dr Mahathir is the president.

Dr Mahathir is an old boy of the college.

In his humorous and witty speech at the function, the Prime Minister said he was happy to meet old friends although he did not recognise some of them anymore because of their age.

"I do meet a lot of Sahoca members who are in government service while at work but I am still disappointed and sometimes feel lonely as there are not many Kedahans in the public sector or in companies based in Kuala Lumpur," he said.

In jest, he said Kedahans should not think that Kedah was the only place in the world and that it was the greatest but should move out to other places like Kuala Lumpur.

"Please come and work here... most of the government officers are from Kelantan, but we want equal representation from all states," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he would like to see Kedahans become a bit more ambitious by venturing out of the state.

"Even in politics I would like to see more of them, of course when I say join politics it does not mean join Pas, join UMNOlah," he said.

He also spoke on the new phenomenon in the country where women seemed to out-number men in getting good jobs in the government.

"I am happy to see that women are more serious in their work, I am beginning to rely more on them," he said.

Recounting his recent experiences on his visit to Antarctica, Dr Mahathir said everything froze in that continent including a person's hair.

"We had to use six layers of clothes but at least I had my wife with me to keep me warm, so did all the other three ministers who were with me.

"But there is no chance of marrying another wife in Antarctica because the only inhabitants there were penguins and seals," he added.

He said although he visited Antarctica when it was summer there, the temperature was way too cold.

Dr Mahathir said to get to Antarctica the Malaysian expedition had to overcome stormy sea with waves of up to fifty feet.

"I survived, it was a very interesting journey... it teaches you about instability and its meaning," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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