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Mahathir-Dialogue
PM HOLDS DIALOGUE WITH FEDERAL OFFICERS IN KELANTAN

KOTA BAHARU, April 12 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today held a dialogue with 1,500 federal government officers working in Kelantan in conjunction with his one-day visit to the state.

The Prime Minister himself chaired the session at the main hall of Universiti Sains Malaysia's medical campus in Kubang Kerian.

Clad in a blue baju melayu, he stood on the stage and invited the officers present to put forward any question they wished to ask.

The officers, who included Kelantan Education Department officials and Hospital USM medical officers, promptly responded to the open invitation.

One medical officer who lectures at the campus raised the problem of teaching a huge number of students and at the same time working in the hospital.

Dr Mahathir responded by saying that the demand from students to enter medical faculties was high.

"We did try to increase the number of seats and medical faculties to accommodate the high demand. And we will continue to do so from time to time," he said.

Stressing that the country was still short of doctors, he expressed regret that some qualified students could not get to study medicine in local universities due to limited places.

"I met a Malaysian, a woman, who is studying in Moscow. I asked her why was she studying here (Moscow), and she said she had applied to do medicine (in Malaysia) but was offered engineering instead. Because of her deep interest (in medicine), her family was willing to pay for her studies abroad," he said.

Another officer asked who should be blamed when a Muslim nation was defeated by enemies of Islam, and the Prime Minister said Muslims themselves contributed to such matters.

He said Islam taught its followers to be always ready and enhance their self-defence to avoid being colonised and to instil fear among their enemies, but at present none of the Muslim countries could match Western nations.

"There are 1.3 billion Muslims in the world. If there is one really strong Islamic country, Israel will certainly not be able to carry out the atrocities. Now it does not care. We are weak because we don't possess the knowledge," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Muslims must master science and technology to be able to compete against developed countries, all of which are non-Muslim nations.

"If we don't possess knowledge in science and engineering, it is impossible for us to produce weapons," he said.

The Prime Minister congratulated female students on their success in controlling 70 percent of the places in local universities.

"Where are the boys? They have not been responsible with regard to the religion's call that they protect the nation. They are engrossed in other things not needed by us," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that due to a lack of expertise in science and technology and limited financial resources, Malaysia was forced to defend itself from other countries.

"But I'm confident that the Malays can control the world if they work hard," he added.

-- BERNAMA
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