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Mahathir-OUM
OUM IMPORTANT TO PRODUCE A GENERATION WITH UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 26 (Bernama) -- The establishment of the Open University of Malaysia (OUM) is an important step towards producing Malaysians who have at least a degree, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The prime minister said that as Malaysia was now in the information technology age, the people's command of knowledge must be emphasised.

He said that the future of a country was determined by its people who are not only highly educated but also skilled in their chosen fields and wise in assessing all matters.

"We need our citizens to have knowledge so that in future our country will be filled with workers who are not only knowledgeable but also efficient in thinking, analysing and differentiating between the good and the bad," he told reporters after giving a briefing to Puteri Umno, here.

Earlier, he opened the OUM, the country's seventh private university, at Jalan Tun ismail, here.

Dr Mahathir said that as the government could not have all the people getting formal education at the institutions of higher learning, the best way for them to get a degree was to allow them to acquire knowledge through distance learning.

"In this way, working students can seek knowledge during their free time through the various special courses tailor-made for them.

"We don't just want Malaysians to go to school and be able to read and write, we want more than that. Where previously we did not care whether there were lessons or not, now everything has changed," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that the response to the OUM since its establishment two years ago was encouraging and it now had 7,000 students.

More opportunities would be opened to working individuals including military and police personnel, he said.

The university, which operates from the former Public Service Department complex in Jalan Tun ismail, here, has a network of 25 centres nationwide.

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