

26/07/2004

Dr M: Developed nations should pay for our talent

MALACCA, Sun. - Developed countries should not be allowed to poach Malaysian talent for free, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said those wanting the services of Malaysian overseas graduates should be made to pay for them.

He said graduates should be categorised as intellectual property as the Government had spent a huge sum of money providing them with education.

"Developed countries often end up getting the best talent without having to bear any costs. So, just like the case of any other intellectual property, those who want the services of our graduates should be made to pay for them," he said after receiving an honorary Doctorate in Knowledge Science from the Multimedia University here today.

He was commenting on efforts by the Government to get Malaysian talent abroad to return.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was yesterday reported as saying that the Government would step up efforts to attract Malaysian talent abroad.

He said more would be done to make sure that Malaysia's best and brightest in foreign universities were not poached by other countries.

A comprehensive plan to achieve the aim is being drawn up to get Malaysian scientists and other experts to return home.

Voicing his support for the Government's plans, Dr Mahathir said it could not be denied that some graduates were tempted by the high salaries and job opportunities in developed countries.

To counter this, it was only logical that more competitive perks be offered to woo the graduates to return.

"Although the perks offered may not be as attractive (as in developed countries), graduates must realise the cost of living in Malaysia is far less than in developed countries."

Earlier, Dr Mahathir received his doctorate from Multimedia University chancellor Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali at the university's fifth convocation at Dewan Seri Negeri.

The award is in recognition of his contributions in the field of science and technology during his tenure as Prime Minister.

A total of 2,585 graduates received their scrolls at the convocation, which was also attended by Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam.

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