

'Meritocracy and Malays' - Mahathir in London

Malaysiakini

03 July 2023

Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad recalled his conversation with Malaysians, including students, during his recent trip to London.

The focus, as it had been throughout his decades-long political career, was the upliftment of the Malays to be on par with the other races, especially the Chinese.

After reiterating his usual spiel since the last general election that the Malays have lost political power, the nonagenarian also touched on the drawbacks of a meritocratic system.

Under such a framework, Mahathir said Malay students might face difficulties in securing scholarships.

“They (Malays) are now a minority party in the government. This may result in many serious problems for the Malays. Because most of these students are studying in foreign countries, they were given scholarships to study although some of them did not fully qualify, but because the government was sympathetic towards them. But now that sympathy is no longer there.

“And again we hear about meritocracy. In a meritocracy, it is most likely that very few Malay students would get a scholarship. But not only scholarship, even in small businesses they may not be able to compete with the non-Malays,” he added in a Facebook post.

‘I have my doubts’

Mahathir also acknowledged that not all present at the discussion were receptive to his argument.

“Of course, some of them felt that it is not fair to discriminate against non-Malays. They believe that if the Malays are not given these crutches, they would then be able to fight for themselves.

“I have my doubts they can do that. Not now anyway. Maybe in the future, when they have developed sufficient strength, they may be able to compete and win through meritocracy. But at this moment we see the performance of Malay students and Malay businesspeople are so far behind that they cannot really compete with others.

“These are the things I had to remind them because these Malays and even Chinese must understand that to have a very big disparity between the rich Chinese and the poor Malays is dangerous for Malaysia because it may lead to

conflicts and violence.

“So what we are trying to do is to enhance the initiatives that we can give to the Malays for the moment until they are in a position to compete with the non-Malays,” he added.

Mahathir said he told his audience that he and those aligned with him are not against the non-Malays but rather want to see a fair distribution of wealth.

“We appreciate the contribution of the non-Malays to the development of Malaysia. But it wouldn’t be good for Malaysia if we find that the Malays are the poor people in a prosperous country.

“That is not something that we think is good for Malaysia. That is what I did, I said, I conveyed to the people living abroad. I wish them success in their future,” he added.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/670705>