

Dr M: Forget our roots if we want to achieve 1Malaysia
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Premier Najib Abdul Razak's 1Malaysia can only succeed if the people turn their backs on their race and origins, and assimilate into one people, said to former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The former PM likened Najib's concept to his own Vision 2020 principle of creating a Bangsa Malaysia to achieve national unity.

"When you NONEsay 'national unity' you forget your past, your origins, and identify yourself only as Malaysian, you speak one language and don't ask for privileges just because you are indigenous or non-indigenous," said Mahathir.

He was fielding questions from the floor during a dialogue session at the third Malaysia-Europe Forum Dialogue in Kuala Lumpur.

Mahathir chided those who spoke up on so called '1Malaysia principles' but still identify themselves as being from a particular racial background, adding that it is this that is skewing the meaning of 1Malaysia.

"We cannot call ourselves Malaysians of Malay origin, Chinese origin or Indian origin," he said, adding that only if the people go past this that 1Malaysia will have true meaning.

He defended the Universities and University Colleges Act (UUCA) which he admitted introducing.

"All students study on public money. It is a waste of public money when they spend their time demonstrating, when you are paid to study and don't study," he argued.

Former International Trade and Industry minister Rafidah Aziz, who moderated Mahathir's talk then interjected.

"I was a lecturerpkrcongress 281110 anwar ibrahim in UM. (Opposition Leader) Anwar Ibrahim was (then) a student of mine, and there was no UUCA at the time," she said.

"Look at what happened to him. He spent most of his time politicking and classes were disrupted. It is so disruptive for education, to those who didn't bother."

She said that, as an academic, she welcomes the UUCA, hinting that its stabilising effects on education will curb more 'Anwars' from emerging.

"When you are in university, please study, After you leave the university, you can do what you like."

Brain drain 'Viagra'

Mahathir took a dig at foreign countries which have 'poached' Malaysian talent, saying that they should repay Malaysian investment into the education of these recruits.

"This is a sore subject for me, but what can we do? Foreign countries offer them higher pay, as high as three times than what we can afford to pay," he lamented.

He said that, when pharmaceutical companies for the west research new drugs, they test hundreds of formulae.

"When they get one that is successful and they can market it, they will use it to recoup the cost of researching the hundreds of formulae. And we will have to pay high prices for drugs like Viagra," he said to laughter from about 400 people in the audience.

He pointed out that Malaysia would have paid millions of ringgit to educate its youth, but would get nothing when the foreign countries absorb them.

NONE "I think that when they take our talent, they have to pay us," said Mahathir half in jest.

He remarked that he had said the same thing in speeches around the world but it had met with a wall of silence, as no one wants to address his point of view.

The forum brought together Mahathir with Rafidah for their first public appearance since their 'Merdeka hug' to end the open acrimony between them at one stage over the issue of Approved Permits.

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