

Mahathir: Do not be swayed by praise

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PEOPLE should not be swayed by praise from other nations concerning the release of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The former prime minister said such commendations were given with underlying reasons and were not always made with sincerity, *Utusan Malaysia* reported him as saying.

"If they want to praise, let them praise but don't take it seriously as they may have certain reasons for doing so," he said when launching *Our Ways*, a novel written by Ismail Harun, at the National Library in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He said Malaysians should hold fast to their principles and not rely on praise from external

sources.

"We must discipline ourselves so that we do not place such a great value on praise from bigger powers," he added.

In his speech earlier, he said the big challenge facing the country was to recover a sense of national pride and display their capabilities to the world.

Berita Harian reported 48,100 Malay graduates remained jobless as of the first quarter of the year.

Out of the 387,000 unemployed during this period, almost 4.5% are graduates who failed to find a job after their studies, said Entrepreneur and Co-operative Development Minister Datuk Mohamed Khalid Nordin.

He said the number of unemployed Malay graduates was much higher compared to non-Malays, who numbered 18,200, and could be attributed to poor skills and expertise.

"The unemployment rate of graduates could be connected to the economic growth rate, as there has been a sudden increase in the number of graduates coming into the workforce who do not possess the necessary skills.

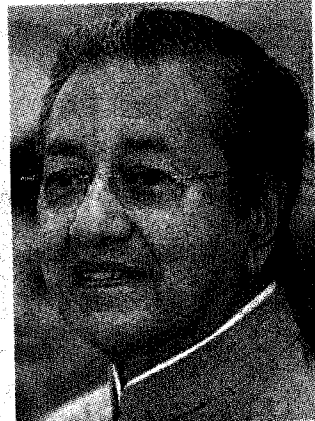
"The development and appreciation of Malay graduates for the fields of science and technology have also been insipid and less than enthusiastic," he said at the 21st Poly-Tech College convocation here yesterday.

He said steps have been taken by the Higher Education and the Human Resource Ministries to solve the problem.

"We are encouraging graduates to get involved in entrepreneurship activities and self-employment after finishing their studies.

"This is in accordance with my ministry's primary aim of preparing an environment that would help and encourage the genuine development of entrepreneurship, which would give birth to quality Bumiputra trade and industry," he added.

A major cigarette distributor told *Utusan Malaysia* that the sale of cigarettes is expected to fall by 10% following the steep increase in prices.



Dr Mahathir: 'There are underlying reasons for praise over Anwar's release'

A spokesman for Commercial Marketers and Distributors Sdn Bhd said the decrease is expected within the next three to eight months.

"Sales are expected to return to normal after this period, as according to previous trends, smokers would shift to smaller cigarette packs or to a cheaper brand.

"The sale of premium cigarette packs will stabilise a few months later," the spokesman said.