

# Planning for a better education set-up

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**GENTING HIGH-**  
**LANDS. Wed. —**  
Political, social and economic factors should be taken into consideration in the planning of education, Education Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamed said today.

It should not be "too much influenced by econometrics as a means of determining the quantitative aims of training."

"This (comprehensive planning) in turn will usher in a society which will be more just, and hence less prone to violent clashes and upheavals," he said.

Dr. Mahathir's remarks were made in a speech read out by Deputy Minister Mr. Chan Slang Sun at the opening of a seminar on "Development of Higher Education in Malaysia: Issues and Problems" at the Genting Highlands Hotel.

## Most progress

The Minister said the period between 1964 and 1974 witnessed the most progress in education.

However, it should not "cloud our eyes to the various obstacles that still prevent the country from achieving the full objectives of its educational programme," he said.

He cited several "grounds of concern" in the system of higher education.

Firstly, while the number of students undergoing tertiary education had increased, it had not done so at the required ratio, that is, for every student in science and technology, there should

have been only two in arts.

There was also a shortage of bumiputras in science and technology.

Dr. Mahathir said that unless steps were taken to change this trend, the nation would not be able to produce the number of skilled bumiputras required in the technical and scientific fields to participate effectively in commerce and industry.

Secondly, he said, expenditure on education had increased tremendously — from \$6.7 million in 1959 to \$120 million in 1974.

But the rate of economic growth of the country was not proportionate to the amount spent because the prices of primary produce were unstable.

Therefore, it was necessary to review the priorities in educational spending, so that it would be in line with the economic state.

There were many ways of improving the system of higher education. One of these was to intensify the education programme.

Dr. Mahathir said that an area that needed attention was political activity in the campuses.

## Damage to life

In the past, there had been too much political activity in the universities and institutions of higher learning.

"I am concerned because such political activity will not only weaken the effectiveness of education in an

university, but also cause damage to life and property," he said.

The chairman of the Higher Education Advisory Council, Raja Tan Sri Azlan Shah whose appointment was announced today, said the seminar would examine the relationship between universities and the Government and how universities could contribute to the planning and implementation of national development programmes.

It would also examine the projections of high-level manpower needs for the Third Malaysia Plan and into the 1980's and the setting up of priority fields of training in terms of national manpower needs.

The four-day seminar is sponsored by the IIEAC and the Regional Institute of Higher Education and Development.