

# Students planning another demo, says Mahathir

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**K**UALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Some university students are planning another series of anti-government demonstrations when the new academic term opens next month, Education Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamed said today.

He told the Dewan Rakyat that the students were now printing pamphlets and believed that no action could be taken against them if they confined their de-

monstrations to the campuses.

They hoped to disrupt the running of the universities and to win more students to their side, he added.

Dr. Mahathir was introducing the Universities and University Colleges (Amendment) Bill.

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Tues.** — The Dewan Rakyat passed today the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Amendment) Bill, which makes the trafficking of dangerous drug an offence punishable with death or life imprisonment.

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Under the Bill, which was later passed, students found guilty of any criminal offence may be suspended from university.

Any student detained or subject to a restrictive order will immediately cease to be a student of the university and will be barred from entering any university.

University students and student bodies are forbidden to become members of or be associated with any organisation, trade union or political party except those provided for under the university's constitution.

Students and student organisations are also forbidden to express support or sympathy or opposition to any political party, trade union, unlawful organisation, body or group of people except with the written

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# Law will prevent abuse: Minister

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permission of the vice chancellor.

Vice chancellors are also given the power to appoint deans and deputy deans and to propose changes in their universities' constitutions.

Dr. Mahathir, in explaining the necessity for the amendments, said that it was obvious that the student unrest was the work of saboteurs, who were trying to use students to gain political power.

He said: "Whether their politics is Left or Right is irrelevant. From the national development point of view the consequences are the same."

The students, he said, had found cause to demonstrate on almost any issue.

"When we have foreign visitors they demonstrate, when we slightly delay the building of a university, they demonstrate... when a vice-chancellor is not appointed, the students demonstrate... if payment of scholarships is delayed, they demonstrate and for a host of other reasons too..." he said.

"Nowhere in the country has there been such goings-on as in the universities. Students take over the campus and expel university authorities.

"Massive quantities of libellous documents and papers are produced in the universities and disseminated throughout the country.

"Day in and day out public money is wasted as students demonstrate and make speeches while lecture halls are deserted.

"Plans made to disrupt life in the campuses and outside are carried out persistently and with impunity."

## Saddening

The Government, he said, would be failing in its duty if it did not oversee the proper use of public property and public money — hence the amendments.

The law would not interfere with students or with the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. It would only prevent the unauthorised use or abuse of universities and their premises for purposes other than "what is generally understood as academic."

## CHEE KHOON: HARSH MEASURES MAY FORCE STUDENTS TO GO UNDERGROUND

"There are therefore no grounds, other than those of pride and privilege, for academicians to protest against the law," he said.

"Academicians cannot consider themselves as a race apart and exempted from the standards of behaviour expected of other citizens."

Dr. Mahathir noted, with sadness, that the majority of the students involved in demonstrations were bumiputras — a community lagging behind others which could only be "saved" through education.

"And even more saddening is that student leaders who are actively obstructing the success of these bumiputra students, are also bumiputras," he said.

These student leaders might be immature, their activities were destroying the community and the nation and were thwarting the achievement of a "balance" among the communities in Malaysia.

Although the students might not be in direct contact with the communist terrorists, their demonstrations in Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and Penang had helped the communist movement, he said.

"The communists became so bold that they even entered a kampung to seek the support of the people.

"They were so elated with the students' action that they did not hesitate to distribute leaflets praising the students."

Dr. Mahathir warned those thinking of directing appeals outside Malaysia to remember that "every one of those to whom they would seek support... has his own skeleton in a cupboard, his own past or even present which will not bear scrutiny."

Malaysia, he added, needed as many trained people as could be produced.

"To produce these trained people, we must utilise to the full the facilities and resources at our disposal," he said.

Dr. Tan Chee Khoon (Pekemas-Kepong) opposed the Bill. He said the Government had misjudged "the mood and temper" of students.

"Repeatedly in this House I have said that student unrest has come to this country and, that judging from the experience of other countries that have seen student unrest, it will pass away," he said.

"But these repressive measures, far from curbing students' political activities, will harden their attitude and if they cannot conduct their activities openly they will just go underground."

## More work

"This will entail far more work for the Special Branch than if they had to look after the overt activities of the students."

Dr. Tan warned the Government that the amendments would be counter-productive and would not prevent students from taking part in politics.

"In any case, why is it wrong for students to take part in politics?" he asked.

Few countries — including near totalitarian states such as South Korea and the Philippines — had banned students from taking part in politics, he said.

"In the hallowed halls of Cambridge and Oxford, students are encouraged to form political clubs and Ministers and even Prime Ministers have addressed such clubs," he added.

"Alas, in Malaysia, the National Front Government is mortally afraid of students achieving political consciousness."

Dr. Tan said that with the amendments the autonomy and academic freedom of Malaysian universities — already seriously eroded — would be virtually abolished.

The Education Minister could now "control the universities from his air-conditioned room," and vice-chancellors, the

academic heads of universities, would be appointed by the Yang Di-Pertuan Agung on the advice of the Minister who will first consult the university council.

The vice-chancellor is now appointed by the university council.

Dr. Tan, who is a member of the University of Malaya Council, said this meant that the vice-chancellor would now be appointed by the Minister who could also appoint deputy vice-chancellors who may or may not be on the university staff.

"These powers virtually make the Minister a dictator in any university and I warn the Government that these changes will have serious repercussions on the recruitment of local and expatriate staff — especially the latter," he said.

As the Minister could not personally exercise these powers, the vice-chancellor would be used as a convenient hatchet man, he added.

The vice-chancellor, now holding these "vast powers" over his students and staff, could also appoint deans and deputy deans in each faculty where before these officers were elected by the members of the faculty.

He also criticised the Government for "revamping" university councils. As the council chairmen would be appointed by the Minister instead of being elected by their peers, the Minister could manipulate them, he said.

Previously, he added, two representatives of the university senates, courts and guild of graduates were elected by their respective bodies to the councils.

Now, only the two senate representatives would be elected.

The court representatives would be removed altogether and graduates' representatives would be appointed by the Minister on the advice of the vice-chancellors.

Dr. Tan also said that the punishment proposed for students under the Bill was harsher than that for ordinary members of the public.

## No redress

"Thus, when a student is convicted of a criminal offence he can be summarily dismissed from the university by

the Minister whose decision is final," he said.

"The student has no further redress in a court of law over the expulsion order, even though, on appeal, a conviction can be reversed," he said.

Dr. Tan criticised the proposed prohibition on students from being members of, or associating with, any society, political party, trade union or other organisations in the university, or outside the campus.

This would apply to those studying overseas as well, he said.

This, he said, showed up a fear that "the student, while he is in our universities or in those abroad, may be contaminated by politicians, trade unionists and others."

"It is a denial of one of our fundamental rights — the right of association."

Dr. Tan said that the implications of the Bill were much wider than its repressive effects on the universities and on the young.

"It makes me ponder on the mood and mentality of those who drafted this shameful piece of legislation," he said.

"If this is how they respond to a peaceful student demonstration, how will they respond to the greater issues that will confront them in the future?"

"Are these the desperate deeds of desperate politicians?"

Dr. Hee Tien Lai (NF-

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