

New way to define 'Malay' sought

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — The government will seek a definition of "Malay" which will also protect the status of other bumiputras, acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad disclosed today.

There is no official interpretation of the word "bumiputra".

Thus, he said it was the government's intention to devise a practical interpretation that could ensure full benefit for all bumiputras.

As for the definition of "Malay", Dr. Mahathir said there was no political implication as this has already been provided under the constitution.

However, the new definition is aimed at protecting them from being used by others.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on a statement he made last Saturday regarding the government's plan to amend the constitution to change the definition of "Malay" in order to protect the ownership of Malay reservation land.

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He said during the National Land Council meeting it even suggested that the constitution be amended. At present the constitution defines a

"Malay" as "a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, conforms to Malay custom"

Dr Mahathir said a new definition would be made to determine which persons would be eligible to be called Malays in companies in which equity is held by Malays.

He said the interests of bumiputras could be jeopardised if such a definition was not made, especially where Malay funds were used to set up a company.

The attorney-general would study the matter to formulate new provisions to the amendment.