

Stop stirring 3Rs issue

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat — The Government will take action against those making an issue out of the 3R curriculum and its implementation, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned today.

The Prime Minister said: "There are some leaders in certain quarters who are making an issue out of this.

"The Government will take action if they continue and if they incite racial dissatisfaction and conflict."

He said the Government knew who these people were and was monitoring their activities.

He, however, declined to name them, saying: "I would

like to leave them to worry about it."

Speaking after chairing a meeting of the Umno Supreme Council here, he said all the accusations against the Government were baseless.

The Government had no intention and had made no effort to convert national-type schools into national schools and would not change the medium of instruction.

The people making an issue of the 3R controversy have somehow connected the new curriculum to a provision in the Education Act enabling the Government to make such a conversion.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, sounding quite exasperated, said this provision was just an "enabling clause."

It was needed in case the Government needed to convert any national-type school.

He said the Government would only carry out a conversion at the request of the school, as had happened only once since independence.

This was a Tamil school in Kelantan which found it difficult to get students. The parents of pupils in the school had formally applied to the Government to turn it into a national school.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the instructions to teachers in national-type schools would however remain in Bahasa Malaysia.

This was in line with normal practice to issue

any Governmental directive in the national language, he said.

He added: "There are a lot of enabling clauses."

He also accused certain quarters of promoting the misunderstanding over the 3R education system "to create dissatisfaction and uneasiness among the Chinese.

"I would like to remind them that there are certain things which are sensitive to not only the Malays but the Chinese and Indians as well.

"They cannot be discussed as they may lead to racial problems.

"The Government is monitoring the activities of these people.

On recent reports that school teachers and headmasters have been receiving kickbacks and commissions from book publishers, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the Government's directive was very clear.

Teachers and other civil servants could not be involved in business of any kind and could not act as sales agents.

He said action would be taken against those involved if formal reports were lodged and proof submitted.