

We'll play at their game: Mahathir

'Party will use mosques and
universities to garner support'

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Umno should adopt the Opposition's strategies of using the mosques and influencing university students to gain wider support, party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says.

"We must follow up on our efforts right to the end. If we give scholarships to students, (and) build so many universities, Umno must have a team to enter the universities," he said in his winding-up speech.

The party has always been abiding by the law and leaving the students alone, he said, while opposition parties have been taking advantage of the situation to instigate them to oppose Umno.

"I admit I'm at fault because I prohibit people from approaching students and influencing them by spreading political information," he said.

Umno believed that these students would support the government, but when they graduated and joined government agencies, they became strong proponents of the Opposition.

Mahathir said the same situation applies to mosques, which are built by the government but used by the Opposition.

"Why is PAS using the mosques? Because we don't use the mosques.

"I think we must do it ourselves ... we must manage everything in the mosques for ourselves.

"We can call knowledge-

able lecturers to sneak on the true Islamic teachings. If we don't do this, surely other people will do it but they want to expand their political influence, not disseminate religious teachings."

Mahathir said Umno must not rely on government agencies to support it and do its biddings.

"Today, we do not give them directives . . . we do everything for ourselves, assuming that they, or the press, will not support us," he said.

This was the situation faced by the opposition parties in the past, and now they have got over it.

"Now, we are living in a hostile society, a society which no longer supports us," Mahathir said, adding that he has explained this new scenario to Supreme Council members.

On the proposal that teachers and government officers who oppose Umno and the government be punished and be transferred to Sabah, he said Umno should not be making more enemies and urged delegates not to make such demands.

He said Sabah has given the Barisan Nasional 17 seats and sending these people there might result in less support for Umno there.

"This is because those who are abused will not keep quiet. If they feel they have been victimised, they will work harder (against us). Human beings are like that."