

# Closer ties with teachers

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IPOH, Tues: The government will get closer to teachers and students, who have been instigated by political elements, to understand their real problems.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he will meet teacher leaders, Cuepacs leaders and teachers.

"We can and will try to contact most of the teachers but we have close to 300,000," he told reporters after launching Teachers Day celebrations today

Mahathir said even if he cannot meet all the teachers, he will try to meet some of them as well as their leaders.

"We have to contact these teachers and find out their problems. What are the reasons which compel them to pawn our children's future."

He said the government has no desire to resort to indiscriminate disciplinary action against teachers except in extreme cases.

"Teachers should have no problems with the government. We have treated them very well and have even paid them salaries for posts which did not exist. What else must we do?"

Groups with vested political interests which had instigated teachers and students were the ones to blame, he said.

Mahathir, who was once Education Minister, said the ruling party should also hold meetings with students, including those in universities who had been misled by these groups, to correct the situation.

He noted that these groups are ready to persuade students to take active part in politics and used them to canvass for votes, spread slander and hold demonstrations.

"This is a loss to us. We are the government party and have no intention to resort to such things even though we have the power which we can use to advance our own interests," he said.