

CATCHING 'EM YOUNG.

More Vision Schools to foster racial harmony

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues: The government will build more Vision Schools (*Sekolah Wawasan*) to foster better relations among the different races.

Under the concept, two vernacular primary schools and a national school are combined under a complex, with the pupils sharing the same curriculum and common facilities.

There are 10 such schools throughout the country

Explaining the need for more Vision Schools, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this is part of efforts to allow schoolchildren of all races to interact and have better relationship while they are still young.

He said Barisan Nasional (BN) members are worried that "certain quarters" are sowing hatred in the kindergartens, schools and universities.

Mahathir, who is BN chairman, earlier chaired two BN meetings, ordinary and general meeting, at the Umno headquarters.

On the situation with university students, Mahathir said: "It worries us because they (students of different races) are not interacting.

"We are trying our best to overcome this. We have already asked the university authorities to place students from different races in the same accommodation," he added.

In June last year, then Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak said varsities must ensure that more of their Muslim and non-Muslim students share hostel rooms to enhance racial harmony and integration.

He was responding to a call from Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who had said mutual respect and tolerance could only be promoted by the young if such values were inculcated during their campus days.

► **BARISAN** PARTIES TO EXPLAIN SAUK INCIDENT - P2