

Varsity student intake will be reviewed each year, says PM

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SINTOK: The intake of students into public universities will be reviewed each year if the seats reserved for bumiputras cannot be filled.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who announced this yesterday, also said the Government was willing to study a proposal to abolish Form

Six and open Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) to non-bumiputras.

He said unfilled university seats reserved for bumiputras would be offered to anyone who could fill the places this year.

He said there would be no change in the 55:45 intake ratio for bumiputras and non-bumiputras, but the numbers could be reviewed if the bumiputra quota could not be filled.

"This year, there are unfilled

seats reserved for bumiputras. We will give them to those who can fill the places. This is only for this year if they are interested.

"If this happens again next year, we will have a relook at the situation," Dr Mahathir told reporters after meeting some 200 student representatives from public institutions of higher learning at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) yesterday.

Asked whether giving up the un-

filled bumiputra seats to non-bumiputra top scorers would cause loss of support among Malays, Dr Mahathir said:

"If they are not able to fill the quota, we cannot close it to other people.

"Even when we give the bumiputras additional training, some of them are obviously not interested. So, they cannot expect us to say no to others," he said.

On a proposal by Gerakan to

abolish Form Six and open UiTM to non-bumiputras, Dr Mahathir said the suggestion needed to be studied before any decision could be made.

"I do not know what is the basis for this request (to abolish Form Six) but if they (Gerakan) can bring out the rationale for it, we are quite prepared to study it," he said.

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He said the Government had to give special consideration for bumiputras because they were discriminated against during colonial times.

"We have always accepted the fact that because of certain weaknesses among the bumiputras, special treatment should be given to them.

"If the principle to help the weak is thrown out, then we will find that those who are unfortunate will, over time, become more unfortunate.

"The other communities accept the need to give bumiputras a chance because of certain elements which are not in their favour," he said.