

# Dr M: Reports on UM fire differ

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PUTRAJAYA: The three agencies which submitted their reports on last month's fire that gutted Universiti Malaya's Dewan Tunku Canselor did not concur on the cause of the blaze, said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The probe was not conclusive yet although there were signs pointing to electrical problems and short-circuit, the Prime Minister said yesterday.

"However, this is still not very clear," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the possibility of arson could not be dismissed.

He said the authorities

which submitted the reports were the Fire and Rescue Department, the police and the Chemistry Department.

Speaking to reporters after chairing a pre-Budget dialogue with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Dr Mahathir said the Government would introduce stiff regulations in universities to ensure that undergraduates focus on their studies.

"They should not turn the place into a centre for external activities that have nothing to do with their studies," he said.

Otherwise, Dr Mahathir said, they would be told to leave although this move

might result in protests from certain quarters.

To a question, he said the Universities and University Colleges Act and regulations would be looked into.

"We may or may not amend them. What is important is that money from taxpayers meant to educate young people and to give them a headstart, is not being misused," Dr Mahathir said.

On the Likas by-election, Dr Mahathir said he hoped Barisan Nasional would recapture the seat.

"We won last time not because of phantom voters," he said.

Earlier in his speech, Dr Mahathir said the Govern-

ment did not want NGOs that were often critical.

"Not only are they not helping the Government but they have become spokesmen for foreigners by running down their own country," he said.

He said their efforts had put off investors, thus jeopardising the Government's plan to upgrade the quality of life here.

Dr Mahathir said the Government hoped to create a bigger middle class.

This group consisted of households with a monthly income between of RM1,500 and RM3,500, he said, adding that the group had increased from 32% in 1995 to 37% in 1999.