

Books or the boot

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By Martin Carvalho

MALACCA, Tues: University lecturers and students will be required to sign an agreement with the government and anyone who fails to perform may be sacked.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this is to weed out those who are not interested in education despite the billions of ringgit spent to support them.

He said the agreement will have a mechanism that enables the government to determine how frequent undergraduates attend lectures and appraise acceptable performance in examinations, among other things.

Those who fail will be told to leave.

Mahathir said the decision will be unpopular with certain quarters

“but we cannot afford to have people who are not interested in education running around ... playing around and wasting our time and money”.

He said it is difficult to take action at the moment because the employment terms are ambiguous and disciplinary procedures complex.

“We will have a proper agreement with them and are working on it,” he said when opening the Melaka-Manipal Medical College in Bukit Baru here today.

He pointed out that the

turn to **PAGE 2**

SUN 18 JUL 2001

Lecturers spreading political views

from **FRONT PAGE**

government spends about RM60,000 on each student a year and expects them to make full use of the opportunity.

However, he said, not all Malay students are irresponsible.

He cited students dressing shabbily for lectures as an example of poor attitude towards studies.

Mahathir also criticised some lecturers for their disinterest in teaching but chose to spread their political views instead. “We cannot afford to pay them to spread their (anti-government) political views.”

“If they find that they are unable to participate in other activities and teaching becomes a burden on them ... they are welcome to leave.”