

# 'Academic aid must commensurate. with semester results'

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**PETALING JAYA, Fri:** The scholarships or loans given to university students should commensurate with their academic performance in every semester.

National Association of Private Education Institutions Malaysia president Dr Mohd Thalha said the association recommends 'this approach rather than the "stick approach" as proposed yesterday by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"The association feels that the students should be made aware of the real cost incurred by the government in providing them with education at institutions of higher learning."

"Therefore, they should submit their results every semester to a special committee under their institution or the Education Ministry for a review of the financial assistance given to them," he said yesterday.

He was commenting on Mahathir's statement on Tuesday that students and lecturers be required to sign an agreement with the government and anyone who fails to perform may be sacked.

Mahathir said this is to weed out those who are not interested in education despite the billions of ringgit spent on them.

Malaysian Association of Private Colleges (Mapco) deputy president Tan Sri R.V. Navaratnam said the move by Mahathir could give more stability and quality to institutions of higher

learning in Malaysia.

He said the move is necessary under the prevailing circumstances in university campuses.

Academics and students have expressed mixed reactions over Mahathir's announcement that they sign a "good behaviour" bond with the government.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) Students' Association deputy vice-president Mohd Zaid Ismail said only a few lecturers are involved in "political" activities. "The lecturers' purpose is not to incite students to take anti-government action, but to educate us in our responsibilities as participants in the democratic process," he said.

UKM political science professor F! Ramasamy said the agreement will exacerbate an already-stifling academic environment.

"There now is a sad situation where we are losing our creativity and imagination," he said.

Ramasamy said there already is the University and University Colleges Act as well as the discretion of vice-chancellors at the disposal of the authorities.

University Malaya Student's Representative Council vice-president Ahmad Shahrir said: "The current campus environment is very tense.

"It will be a good thing if the truly destabilising elements are removed, but there must be a careful study before any action is taken."