

WAKE - UP CALL

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Mahathir: Drastic Steps mullied to change Malay students' mindset

By SA'ODAH ELIAS

KUALA LUMPUR: The Government is prepared to take drastic actions "to wake Malay students from their slumber", including enrolling them into public universities strictly on merit.

"Many Malay students nowadays are so convinced that they no longer need the government's help.

"So we want to see what will happen to them if we do this," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told reporters after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting here yesterday. (See Page 2)

The Prime Minister also voiced his concern on the abuse of the National Education Policy, saying that the Government was prepared to amend laws and even the Federal constitution so that Malay students would not become "political victims".

Unless the problem was addressed immediately, he said, Malay students would continue to lag behind their friends of the other races and would continue to be the majority of those involved in undesirable activities like the black metal cult.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said the Government was prepared to change the intake system into public universities so that it would be based strictly on merit.

"If forced to, we are prepared to take drastic measures. Maybe we will reduce the intake of Malay students, or maybe we will introduce a meritocracy system for a year.

"Then we shall see what hap-

pens," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Government needed to jolt the Malays into realising that many of their achievements were aided by the Government.

He said although there would be a backlash against the Government and Umno, such drastic measures might be needed because the problem affecting the Malay students and the abuse of the education policy by those in the education system had reached an alarming level.

"This is too serious a matter for us to be giving political consideration," he said.

"That's why I call people who are trying to make political capital at the expense of the students, traitors."

Asked who he was referring to, Dr Mahathir said: "We don't have to say it but people can make certain assumptions.

"Whenever we want to do something good, we find that it will be politicised, interpreted and twisted for political advantage.

"Many of our attempts to help the Malays have failed because people will always come out and make a political issue out of it."

Dr Mahathir said the Government would introduce a new system of teaching where teachers would act only as facilitators through a limited use of the Internet while the subject would be based on a syllabus.

"This way, we hope to rehabilitate our education system while curbing some teachers from imposing their political beliefs on students."