

VARSITY ON MERIT

Modified admission system to start next year, says Dr M

By SA'ODAH ELIAS

KUALA LUMPUR: Student intake in public universities based on a modified merit system will start next year, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced yesterday.

However, he said, in the first year of implementation, the system would only apply to selected faculties, especially those which require high academic achievement.

The faculties would be announced later.

"What this means is that we will increase the academic requirement for Malay students for admission to these faculties.

"For example, the minimum requirement for Malay students to go into the medical faculty is currently 7As. We will raise this requirement so that only quality students will be chosen.

"In time, when we have managed to force the Malay students to improve their academic performance, we will implement this system in other faculties," he told reporters after briefing Umno division leaders on the proposed system and other education issues affecting the Malays.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said although the policy on the quota system would be maintained, the new system would alter the student ratio — places which cannot be filled by Malays because they are not up to the mark will be open to others based strictly on merit.

"A full meritocracy system is what we want, but we realise that this cannot be implemented in one

Dr M: Move to compel Malays to strive harder

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fe swoop. If we do that, the effect will be catastrophic and it is possible that not a single Malay student will be able to gain admission into certain faculties.

"Let this be a warning to Malay students to study harder because they must realise that they cannot have their cake and eat it too. If they refuse to study hard, they will not get to go to public universities," Dr Mahathir added.

He said the move was not meant to limit places for Malay students, but was a measure to compel them to strive harder for academic excellence.

As far as possible, he said, the Government still wanted to ensure that Malay students filled their quota but not if it meant lowering

the requirements for their admission.

"We want that quota, but not if it ends up compromising on quality. So, if we can't fill up the Malay quota, then it is all right so long as we can improve the quality of Malay graduates," he said.

He also announced that the Government would monitor closely the activities of religious teachers and some university lecturers to ensure that they would no longer corrupt their students with their political ideologies.

Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, when asked about the acceptance of Umno grassroots leaders towards the proposed merit system, said:

"It is well accepted. They understand the need, especially after being briefed by the president."

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