

'Islamic militant groups aim to topple govts'

SUN - 4 SEP 2001

By **S. Gayathri**

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon: The Islamic militant groups which want to establish Islamic nations by linking three Southeast Asian countries are not aiming to establish Islamic rule.

Their struggle is more towards toppling governments which they think are unIslamic, Umno president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"Their ambition is not to establish an Islamic nation, but to take control of the government ... after gaining control, the type of rule which they will practice is a different question," he told reporters after chairing a three-and-half-hour Umno Supreme Council meeting today.

Mahathir said these groups want to overthrow the government through violence, even though the government is recognised as an Islamic one by the rest of the world.

He said it is clear that the struggle of these groups is not to fight the enemies of Islam, such as those who persecute Muslims and those who are against the religion.

"This is actually a violent struggle for power," he added.

Mahathir also announced that the supreme council has decided to implement a "conditional merit system" for Malay students to enter public universities in stages.

He said this will ensure that the entry of Malay students is not drastically reduced.

"But we need to raise the entry qualifications in stages before they are accepted into arts, science and technology and religious courses.

"We will also ensure that religious studies are purely that and do not have political elements or campaigns to hate the government in the courses and in the exams," he said.

On Aug 8, Mahathir announced that meritocracy will be implemented for the admission of Malays students into local universities from the next intake.

On the underground student movements, Mahathir said several counter-measures have been identified to tackle the matter, but he declined to elaborate.

**State Umno chiefs to take
over from suspended
divisional leaders - Page 8**