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Dr M: No need to rush amendments

Chow Kum Hor

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Amendments to the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 should not be made hastily, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"If the amendments results in undesirable effects, people will say we rush through things. This is why we need more time," he said at a Press conference after opening the Malaysian Electric Power Forum 2001.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on a statement by Deputy Education Minister Datuk Abdul Aziz Shamsuddin yesterday that amendments to the Act should be expedited. Abdul Aziz had also said a Cabinet report detailing amendments could be ready by early next year.

Dr Mahathir said universities had been turned into "agitation centres" and many students spent little time studying. He said the Government which had allocated a lot of money for their education did not get the desired returns.

Last week, Dr Mahathir was reported to have said that the Act may have to be reviewed to deter students from engaging in negative activities.

Meanwhile, when asked to comment about the arrest of 41 people who had gathered in front of the Kamunting Detention Camp yesterday, Dr Mahathir said it was just a small protest.

"I am told 100,000 people will be protesting against the G-7 Summit, scheduled to be held soon. In Malaysia, maybe 30 or 100 people protesting is a small thing. I don't see why people should be bothered about these things," said Dr Mahathir.