

27 JULY 2001
Mahathir-Students
RADICAL ACTION TO HELP MALAY STUDENTS

KUALA LUMPUR, July 27 (Bernama) -- Umno President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today warned that radical action will be taken to prevent Malay students from lagging behind in their studies.

The action would include reducing the number of places for Bumiputera students in public institutions of higher learning and cutting back on government aid, he told newsmen after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting at the party's headquarters here today.

Asked if this mode of action would be a backlash on the government and Umno, he said, "There will be a backlash but this is too serious a matter for us to be giving political consideration".

"That's why I call people who are trying to make political capital as traitors."

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

"Whenever we want to do something good, we will find that what we do will be politicised, interpreted and twisted in order to gain political advantage.

"This is why many of our attempts to help the Malays have failed because people always will come out and make a political issue out of it," he said.

The Prime Minister who was obviously upset with the problems plaguing Malay students, said Umno as the backbone party of the government would ask that radical action be taken to help overcome the problem.

"We cannot take the matter lightly....that we entertain them because it a basic human right. We should place importance on their future and the country's future," he said.

In this light, Dr Mahathir said a special body comprising government and education officers would be formed to see how best to improve the situation.

"There will be no special allowance. If they are really keen, love this country and are patriotic, they should become members of the body voluntarily and not expect any returns," he said.

Asked as to who would head the body and when it would commence operations, he said Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamed would assume the main role and it would become operative soon.

He hoped the special body would receive the support of education officers, teachers and those who realise their responsibility towards improving the situation.

"We will not tolerate misuse of our education system for any other interest other than getting a formal education, he said.

Dr Mahathir also said action would be taken against those who do not implement the education policy.

"If necessary, we will amend the laws and even the Federal Constitution to prevent our education system from being betrayed.

"We cannot allow this betrayal to continue as it has led to the present situation where Malay students have become involved in devil worship and others," he said.

The Umno President also said that the Supreme Council also suggested that teachers be introduced as facilitators to teach according to a set curriculum.

"We will broadcast through limited Internet usage to schools to ensure

what is taught is according to the curriculum fixed and that there is no deviation to other forms of teachings." he said.

-- BERNAMA

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