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Sack for errant lecturers (HL)

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LANGKAWI, Sun. - The Prime Minister today said university lecturers and other staff who use students to undermine the Government would be removed.

A concerted effort would be made to identify and act against those using students to undermine the Government, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said this would include removal of university staff who were involved.

"We will identify them ... if they are university staff we have to put a stop to that. We have to get these people out ... we have some ideas on the number of those involved in such activities and they include lecturers," he said.

The Prime Minister said most of those involved were connected to those supposed to be teaching religion.

"They are supposed to be teaching religion, but they don't actually do it ... the fact is they are teaching politics."

Dr Mahathir was asked about a Mingguan Malaysia report on an underground movement in local universities which had influenced students to topple the Government.

The report quoted an ex-Universiti Teknologi Malaysia student Wan Noor Hayati Wan Alias as saying that the movement used religious activities in campuses as a front.

Dr Mahathir said the Government was not surprised by such efforts by certain quarters.

"When you incite the younger generation they will not hesitate to resort to violence to achieve their aims.

"This is the danger when certain people go around inciting people that the Government is unIslamic and led by a kafir (infidel)," he said, adding that he was saddened that those involved were Malays.

On the use of religious activities as a front, Dr Mahathir said this was done as those involved knew when religion was used others would not dare to interfere.

Dr Mahathir said the Government was also aware some students had been involved in campaigning for the Opposition, especially Pas, during elections.

He said it was a waste of the taxpayers' money when students resorted to doing so.

"We spend so much money for them to study, but others disturb them until they start campaigning, demonstrating, et-cetera ... this is a real waste."

Earlier, Dr Mahathir spent the morning visiting various development and tourism-related projects on the island.

He expressed satisfaction on the progress made at the yacht repair centre at Tanjung Lembong and cable car project at Burau Bay.

The yacht repair centre is a joint venture between the Penang Shipbuilding Corporation and the Langkawi Development Authority.

Dr Mahathir said there were also plans to use the centre as a yacht construction dockyard.

The dockyard is expected to be partially operational in time for the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (Lima) in October.

On the cable car project, he said it was expected to be completed by April next year as scheduled.

The Prime Minister also took the opportunity of his visit here to take a boat ride along Sungai Kilim.

He said boat rides along mangrove swamps near the river had great tourism potential.

"I have seen many mangroves in other parts of the world but this is the best.

"I am confident it has the potential to attract tourists from all over ... this is a unique and fantastic product in Langkawi," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Langkawi was already doing well in attracting tourists with 1.1 million people having visited the island until July this year.

He said it was estimated more than 2.2 million people would visit Langkawi this year.