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Shock treatment

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad issued a wake-up call to Malay university students recently: Perform, or have a privilege withdrawn.

He said the number of university places for Malay students might be reduced for a certain length of time - perhaps one year - to determine how well they could keep up with those from the other ethnic groups.

The Prime Minister, while acknowledging that there might be a backlash, said radical measures were necessary to check the poor academic performance of Malay students.

His statement provoked a variety of reactions. Many have spoken for and against the proposed move which, if implemented, will essentially see the abolishment of the ethnic-based university quota system in favour of one based on merit, for the period of time stipulated.

There were also those who suggested what they deemed were more effective ways to counter the problem.

But whether or not they agreed with the proposal enunciated by the Prime Minister, all were striving to safeguard the same thing - the welfare of the country's Malay youths.