

# Eye on religious studies

**Govt plans to have integrated curriculum for all schools, says Mahathir**

SUN - 7 FEB 2007

**PUTRAJAYA, Fri:** The government plans to have an integrated curriculum for religious studies which will be applicable to all religious and government schools.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this is important as some religious teachers in government schools bring in elements of politics in their classes.

He said, however, there will be some problems as religious matters are under the prerogative of the state government.

"There may be some state governments that will defend what they perceive as religious teachings but the fact is that they are defending the training of their future cadres," he said after launching the first anniversary of Putrajaya as a federal territory here today.

Asked whether it would be sensitive for the federal government to interfere in religious matters which come under the purview of the state government, Mahathir said it is responsible for all types of education which is under its jurisdiction.

Mahathir said this when asked to comment on a report in a Bahasa

Malaysia daily today that 12 teachers of a religious school in Johor Baru were detained and the school was closed for suspected involvement with the Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (*see story on Page 2*).

Mahathir said he has yet to receive any report on the incident.

"But it is similar to Pakistan where religious schools do not teach religion. Instead, they teach how to topple the government through violence."

Mahathir added that unfortunately, when the authority takes action, they will say that the authority is against religious teachings.

"We need to check whether religious schools are really teaching religion or not. I know that there are some religious schools where students take 14 years to complete their studies in theology.

"This means that they are not there to study but they are there with other purposes," he said.