

Dr M:

NO

STAR 22 JUN 2002

TIME

FRAME

KUALA LUMPUR: No time frame has been set for the plan to remove more of the privileges enjoyed by the Malays so as to get them to compete on equal terms with other races.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the matter would also not be discussed officially in the Cabinet or at the Umno supreme council level.

"I am not talking about a time frame. What I meant was that if we are strong enough, if we are able to be better than the rest, then there is no longer any need for us to be aided by 'crutches.'

"We only need crutches if we are lame, except if maybe we want to appear stylish," he told a press conference at the end of the second day of the Umno general assembly yesterday.

The Umno president said he believed that if one day the Malays were able to be masters in all fields then there would no longer be any need to have special privileges.

He said this would come when the Malays were able to buy back even non-Malay reserve land that had been sold, build their own skyscrapers and compete openly with everyone.

At the moment, he said, the Malays' achievements were quite limited, although there were some of them who were quite competitive both nationally and internationally.

"However, the number of successful Malays is still too small," he added.

On Thursday, Dr Mahathir said the Government was experimenting with the idea of withdrawing some protection accorded under Malay privileges by reducing some of the protection given to them in education.

He also said that if the Malays could prove that they were able to withstand the competition, the Government could think of further reducing some of the protection.

Asked about a report about a conversation he had with Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee yesterday,

STAR 22 JUN 2002
PM: Somebody wanted me to help in crisis

● FROM PAGE ONE

day, Dr Mahathir said:

"Apparently, somebody wants me to intervene (in the India-Pakistan crisis). What they did was tell Vajpayee that I wanted to speak to him and then told me that he (Vajpayee) wanted to speak to me.

"But when I spoke to him he told me: 'But I thought you wanted to speak to me' So, somebody is trying to get me involved but I am not competent," he said.

Asked what he and Vajpayee talked about, Dr Mahathir said since he was already on the telephone with the Indian Prime Minister, he asked him about the situation regarding the crisis.

● TURN TO PAGE TWO