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Campuses are places of learning, not politics

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THE brouhaha over the assault on the president of the Jordan Umno Club is really depressing. Not just for the fact that the incident is a "national disgrace", as described by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Badawi (NST, Nov 25 ) and that it reeks of a certain Opposition party's tendency to go beyond our shores to influence the minds of students, but also for the misguided attitude of the students.

What happened clearly underscores what has been oft lamented by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, that students, particularly Malay male students, tend to focus more on political activities than their studies.

This recent incident is clear evidence of this ugly truth, and I dare say it is just one of many such happenings in local and foreign campuses.

It's not that students should not have any interest in politics. We are all realistic enough to know that students have a tendency to be vocal about many issues.

But political involvement of university students should be minimal. It's one thing for political parties to welcome students, but quite another to regard campuses as "political turfs" to squabble over.

Parents and schools have a duty to ensure that they do not impose their political ideals on their children and students. Instead, they should emphasise a sound education.

The effort to get students to have the right focus and attitude must be a collective one. Political parties, particularly the Opposition, must realise they are gambling not only with the future of these students, but