

PM challenges males to balance varsity gender ratio

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SHAH ALAM: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has challenged Malay males to increase their numbers in universities to equal that of females.

The Prime Minister said he wanted to see a 50:50 ratio of male and female students as presently females made up 70% of the student population.

"It is worrying when enrolment at universities is unequal at 70:30, with a majority of females.

"It is better to have gender balance at institutions of higher learning. But while we take

necessary steps to increase the male intake, we will not reduce the places for women," added Dr Mahathir during the Merdeka Festival-cum-Virtual Groundbreaking of Universiti Teknologi Mara's second campus at Bandar Puncak Alam here.

Dr Mahathir said acquiring knowledge was an important factor in nation building.

"A learned society will be able to control the surrounding situation. It is knowledge, and not arms that defines success for a nation," he added.

Dr Mahathir said in view of this, Malaysia spent 26% of its annual budget on education.

"However, there is no point constructing state-of-the-art facilities when our youths have no desire to pursue higher studies, or spend their time in other futile activities when they should be concentrating on scoring good grades," he added.

"During this Merdeka celebrations, make a pledge to excel in your studies, so that you will graduate with excellent grades and use the knowledge to protect and build your country."