

Keep it at varsity level

PM: Students should not get caught up with outside politics

BY SA'ODAH ELIAS

~~Star 7/9/03~~
CYBERJAYA: There is nothing wrong in university students getting involved in politics, provided their involvement is limited to politics within their own universities, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said they should not get caught up with outside politics when the cost of their activities was paid for with the people's money, which had been used to provide them with scholarships and all the necessary facilities.

"Getting involved in politics is natural but at least wait until you have concluded your education and are earning your own money. Then you can pay for the cost of getting involved in politics on your own," he said after having one-to-one meetings with members of the Multimedia Super Corridor International Advisory Panel at the end of the panel's three-day meeting here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said there were many students who gave priority to off-campus politics and not their studies.

"When there is political campaigning, they go out and campaign and are willing to tell lies, cheat and slander. This is very regrettable because the cost of them getting involved in all these activities is being borne by others.

"The Government has provided them with various facilities but there are people with a personal political agenda who teach them not to be thankful, not to be grateful, and this can cause chaos in society," he said.

He was commenting on the outcome of the 2003/2004 student body elections at local public universities that saw the "pro-aspiration" groups winning in 15 out of 17 universities, with the exception of Universiti Malaya and International Islamic University Malaysia.

The "pro-aspiration" groups are said to support the Government.

Asked whether it was good to label student groups as pro-government or

pro-opposition, Dr Mahathir said:

"I would like to think that those said to be pro-government are students who are more concerned about doing well in their studies and do not want to be disturbed by outside political elements while students said to be pro-opposition are those whose minds have been corrupted by the politics of hatred.

"The pro-aspiration groups are not directly involved in any political movement and if they support the Government, it is only because they are aware of their responsibilities."

Dr Mahathir said students would have no qualms about supporting the Government if they were not instigat-

ed to hate it.

"We give them scholarships, we provide them with facilities and universities and for the poor, we provide study loans. There is no reason for them to hate the Government," he added.

On the study carried out by the Education Ministry which showed that the teaching of Mathematics and Science in English since January had improved students' performance. Dr Mahathir said he had expected that result.

He said students benefited from the move because most reference materials for Science and Mathematics were in English and learning the subjects in

English had enabled students to absorb knowledge faster.

"Everybody needs to have some knowledge of Science and Mathematics. Even for those who want to be an artist, there will come a time when they need to use the computer.

"Knowledge of Science and Mathematics is very important for a community that wants to progress," he added.

On the meetings with the International Advisory Panel members, he said they were very fruitful and many good suggestions were put forward, including a proposal for direct co-operation with global information technology companies.