

# Dr M to students: Stay clear of street demonstrations

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**KUCHING:** University and college students should focus entirely on their studies rather than be involved in street demonstrations, advised Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Sunday.

Even though he admitted there was nothing wrong with students getting involved in politics (as long as they do not go overboard), the former prime minister said there existed more proper platforms for students to air their political messages and ideologies.

Speaking during a question-and-answer session after closing Unimas' 'National Patriotism and Politic Convention: The Real Direction', Dr Mahathir reminded students to appreciate the educational opportunity and government financial support which enabled them to pursue higher education.

"Students should be more mature and focused on studying hard instead of getting involved in street protests. It has always been the government's wish to send youths to acquire education.

"These students should be smart

These students should be smart enough to use the government's financial backing to pursue their studies. Please do not misuse the funds and government's goodwill to provide education.

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, former Prime Minister

enough to use the government's financial backing to pursue their studies. Please do not misuse the funds and government's goodwill to provide education."

Dr Mahathir said this in response to a question which touched on students' involvement in demonstrations in relation to the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 (UCA 1971).

He explained that the law was established to ensure students do not go overboard in their political expression. He added that there were proper avenues such as dialogues, debates and political talks they could use.

"Anybody can demonstrate, regardless of one's educational background. Those who refrain from participating in demonstrations do not become politically ignorant.

"So, why want to waste time in demonstrations instead of spending time on your studies?"

Asked by a retired army colonel who questioned the rationale for preventing the army's direct involvement in politics, Dr Mahathir explained that the army is a professional body involved in maintaining the security of the country.

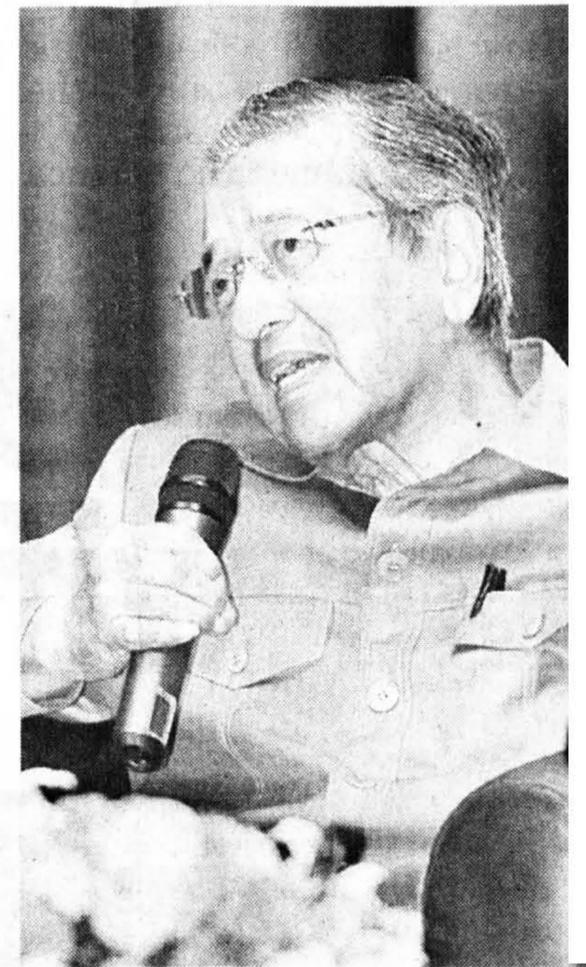
By nature, the army's main objective is to implement orders from the government of the day.

"More importantly, the country's government is chosen by the people. If the current government is replaced by a new government in the future, the army must also accept orders from the new government.

"Otherwise, they can't operate professionally or execute their jobs properly."

On dirty politics happening in today's political scene, Dr Mahathir opined that politics was never dirty, except for the people involved in it.

Among those present at the



**USE PROPER PLATFORMS:** Dr Mahathir fielding questions at the dialogue session on Sunday.

event were Chief Minister Pehin Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, Unimas vice-chancellor prof Datuk Dr Khairuddin Abdul Hamid, Unimas board of directors chairman Datu Dr Hatta Solhi and convention project director Muhamad Ikram Jalil.