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Dr M: Keep BTN course

KUALA LUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad feels that the course curriculum of the National Civics Bureau (Biro Tatanegara) should be retained.

The former prime minister said having delivered lectures at BTN several times, including speaking on the country's history, he found the course to be appropriate.

He said BTN served its purpose in explaining to government officers the importance of being committed to their service for the good of the nation.

While people sometimes misunderstood the values taught under BTN to create a progressive culture, Dr Mahathir said he did not see the course's modules as being negative.

Speaking after opening the World AIDS Day 2009 commemoration event at the Wangsa Walk Mall yesterday, Dr Mahathir said: "However, deciding on whether BTN should be revamped or not is the government's responsibility."

He said it was true that the BTN modules touched on the country's history, including the origins of Malays, Chinese and Indians, adding that there was nothing wrong with that.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on a recent statement by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz that BTN would be reviewed to mirror the 1Malaysia concept.

The relevance of BTN had been hotly debated following the Selangor government's decision to bar its civil servants and students of state-owned institutions of higher learning from



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— Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad
Former prime minister



attending the course.

Selangor claimed that it was a Barisan Nasional effort to indoctrinate the people.

"There is nothing negative about BTN as the module is appropriate to instil awareness about nationalism in people," said Dr Mahathir.

Commenting on opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's call for an independent observer from Australia to oversee Malaysia's 13th general election, Dr Mahathir said: "That is his (Anwar's) style. He prefers to trust the white people and not Malays."

To a question on the implementa-

tion of the goods and services tax (GST), Dr Mahathir said a study on the matter should be done first, with feedback from all stakeholders.

He said it was important that the GST did not burden the people.

In his keynote address at the function yesterday, Dr Mahathir called on non-governmental organisations and the private sector to assist the government in educating the public on diseases such as AIDS.

He said ignorance was the main reason for the spread of AIDS, adding that with early education from young, the rise in such diseases could be curbed.