

Mahathir to clarify automatic promotion issue on TV

S.E. 27 MAR 1975

PENANG, Wed. — Education Minister, Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamed, announced today that officials from his Ministry would appear on television soon to answer questions from the public regarding the automatic promotion of pupils until Form Three.

Speaking to reporters on his arrival at the Bayan Lepas Airport this afternoon for a two-day official visit, Dr. Mahathir said that the question of whether such automatic promotion was good or bad for the country had created much controversy.

"I will put my officials on television so that both sides — the pros and cons — would be presented to the public for them to decide," he said.

"This will help the members of the public to better understand the situation."

Two extremes

"If the decision is unanimous one way, we will follow. If not unanimous, then somebody will have to make a decision, mainly the Government."

Dr. Mahathir said that while others had even called for total abolishment of examinations until the Higher School Certificate level, there were others who said that we should have yearly examinations so as to keep the pupils on their toes.

"Between these two extremes, there are a number of variations, none of which are perfect."

"What I have done is to make a very careful study of the proposals. We have experts in the Education Ministry and they are studying the question of automatic promotion," he added.

Referring to the Cabinet Committee for the review of education policy, Dr. Mahathir disclosed that a total of 307 memoranda — at the last count — had been received by the Committee from the public.

"The response had been very good. Many of the memorandums received provided useful views while there are some which are irrelevant."

First phase

"These memorandums are being carefully condensed and the Cabinet Committee will meet to discuss them," he added.

Dr. Mahathir said that the receiving of the memoranda was the first phase of the project.

"The second phase is that various Committee members had to be briefed and updated on all educational matters so that when the time comes for them to make decisions, they will have the background knowledge."

Dr. Mahathir will present certificates to participants of the RECSAM sponsored courses at the RECSAM Building in Bukit Glugor tomorrow.

He will also call on the Chief Minister, Dr. Lim Chong Eu, at the latter's office.