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IPOH, MARCH 15 (BERNAMA) -- THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT CHANGE THE STATUS OF NATIONAL-TYPE CHINESE AND TAMIL SCHOOLS TO NATIONAL SCHOOLS ALTHOUGH IT IS EMPOWERED TO SO, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

HE SAID THAT RECORDS SHOWED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NEVER FORCED ANY NATIONAL-TYPE SCHOOL TO CONVERT TO A NATIONAL SCHOOL.

THE CONVERSION OF A NATIONAL-TYPE SCHOOL INTO A NATIONAL SCHOOL HAD OCCURRED ONLY ONCE, INVOLVING A NATIONAL-TYPE TAMIL SCHOOL IN KELANTAN, BUT THIS WAS AT THE REQUEST OF PARENTS AND THE PUPILS THEMSELVES, HE SAID.

OPENING A COMPUTER SCIENCE EXHIBITION AND FORUM OF THE SEKOLAH MENENGAH SHEN JAI HERE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WAS AWARE THAT THERE WERE SOME WHO HAD MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE EXISTENCE A PROVISION IN THE EDUCATION ACT IN RELATION TO THIS.

HE ASSURED THEM THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD REVIEW THE ACT SO THAT ALL DOUBTS ON THIS WOULD BE ERASED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT RESTRICT THE SETTING UP OF NATIONAL-TYPE SCHOOLS OR THE USE OF THE MOTHER TONGUES OF THE VARIOUS COMMUNITIES BECAUSE MALAYSIA WAS A MULTI-RACIAL COUNTRY. -- MORE  
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HE SAID THAT ALL THE PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY SHOULD ACCEPT THEMSELVES AS MALAYSIANS ALTHOUGH THEIR ANCESTORS COULD BE FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIA PRACTISED A LIBERAL POLICY, ALLOWING THE USE OF OTHER LANGUAGES ALTHOUGH BAHASA MALAYSIA WAS THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE.

HE SAID THAT BAHASA MALAYSIA WAS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE TO ENABLE THE PEOPLE TO COMMUNICATE BETWEEN ONE ANOTHER EASILY.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO SAID THAT THE PEOPLE SHOULD KEEP ABREAST WITH DEVELOPMENTS IN COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY FOR GREATER PROGRESS.

HE LATER APPROVED GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE OF \$100,000 FOR THE SEKOLAH SHEN JAI, A PRIVATE SCHOOL.

ALSO PRESENT AT THE FUNCTION WERE DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH MOHAMAD ALI, MENTERI BESAR DATUK SERI RAMLI NGAH TALIB AND HEALTH MINISTER DATUK MAK HON KAM. -- BERNAMA  
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