

Mahathir: English is also important

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ARAU, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded the people not to be unduly fanatical about Bahasa Malaysia but realise the need to also improve their proficiency in English.

Stressing that no one can question the status of Bahasa Malaysia as the national language, the Prime Minister reminded the people that the English language was the international communication language.

Dr Mahathir said: "We cannot deny that we must communicate with other countries and do business with them in a language which both sides understand, that is the English language."

Professions

At international forums, the treaties and other documents signed are in English which all sides can understand. Even the Indonesians who were not proficient in the language some time ago are now better than Malaysians at these international meetings, he said.

Proficiency in the language is vital in certain professions and particularly vital to teachers, professors and diplomats, he said when addressing pupils and

teachers at Sekolah Menengah Datuk Sheikh Ahmad.

Earlier, he advised pupils to choose their subjects wisely, with the help of teachers. They must take into consideration the needs

of the nation where the demand is for industrial and vocational skills and not just arts subjects.

"The country needs more engineers, technicians, skilled workers and craftsmen."

Later, when addressing representatives of various categories of Government officers, he said that they must understand the values and concepts of parliamentary democracy.

He told them that it

was a misconception to think of elected representatives as their political masters. The role of the politicians, he said, was to channel the aspirations of the people.