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LEAD Mahathir-English (replaces earlier item)

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KUALA LUMPUR, March 8<sup>19</sup> (Bernama) -- A pass in English Language in examinations will be made compulsory if the standard of the language among students continues to deteriorate, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today. (e)

The prime minister, expressing anxiety over the deterioration in the standard of the language, said it was important to master English along with Bahasa Malaysia.

+In this modern era, knowledge of one language only was insufficient, and the English Language is recognised as an international language,+ he told reporters here.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he hoped that the necessary measures would be taken by the Education Ministry, parents and teachers to upgrade the use of English among students.

He also said that proposals had been made repeatedly by various quarters to make a pass in the English Language compulsory in examinations but the government had not yet made a decision. -- more

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LEAD Mahathir-English 2 Kuala Lumpur

+But if the situation worsens, we may have to determine whether to make it a compulsory subject,+ he said.

The English Language is a compulsory subject in examinations but it is not necessary for a pass in the language in an examination to obtain a certificate. For example, a student can pass the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination even without a pass in the English Language paper.

The prime minister said he would leave it to the Education Ministry to take further action. -- Bernama

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