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ABOLISHING ENGLISH ADS NEEDS RATIONAL CONSIDERATION, SAYS MAHATHIR
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 9 (Bernama) -- The proposal to abolish advertisements in English in the country should be considered in a rational manner and not in haste, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said such a move should suit the situation because the language was still an important means of communication especially in the international arena.

+If everyone understands the national language, then advertisements in English are not necessary but in certain situations where we want to focus on non-Malaysians, for example, we may still need English,+ he told reporters after attending the national-level Maulidur Rasul gathering at Dataran Merdeka here.

He was asked to comment on a proposal to abolish advertisements in English over radio and television, which had become a hot topic of discussion.

The proposal was made by a cultural expert, Puan Azah Aziz, who felt that the radio and television stations in the country need no longer air advertisements in English and have a special English network as this did not reflect the national identity. -- more

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The prime minister said he did not want the people in the country to be too fanatical over the spirit of nationalism to the extent that they completely did not want to use the English language.

The proposal to abolish advertisements in English appeared to have led to other suggestions, that ministers should not speak in English and that there should be no English newspapers, he said.

Dr Mahathir questioned how the ministers were to attract foreign investments to the country if they should not speak in English.

The use of English would not affect the spirit of nationalism in the country, he said.

+I consider myself a nationalist ... just because I speak English sometimes does not mean that I cease to be a nationalist,+ he said.

He said that when he was in Indonesia recently, he found that English was being used more now than before in that country.

+I was interviewed in English although I can speak their language,+ he added. -- more

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He added: +So we must be rational, our thinking must be rational, we must not get carried away by emotions nor always think of ourselves. Should we only regard language development as overall development when we are not progressive in other fields?+ he asked.

The prime minister said Malaysia wanted 100 per cent progress in all fields and if command of other languages was needed for progress, it would be a must for society in this country.

Ability to use English was a big advantage especially when attending international meetings, he added. -- Bernama

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