

English still important, says Dr Mahathir

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Any proposal to abolish advertisements in English must be considered rationally, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

This is because the English language is still an important means of communication, especially in the international scene.

"If everyone understands the national language, then advertisements in English are not necessary but in certain cases, where we want to focus on non-Malaysians, English is important and necessary."

Dr Mahathir said this to reporters after attending the national-level Prophet Muhammad's birthday celebrations at Merdeka Square here.

He was asked to comment on a proposal to abolish advertisements in English over radio and television, made by a cultural expert, Puan Azah Aziz.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians should not be too fanatical over the spirit of nationalism to the extent that they did not want to use English altogether.

"The proposal to abolish advertisements in English appeared to have led to other suggestions, that ministers should not speak in English," he said.

"How are ministers going to attract foreign investments to the country if they do not speak in English?"

"So we must be rational, our thinking must be rational, we must not get carried away by emotions," the Prime Minister said, adding that Malaysia needed its people to have a command of other languages for continued progress and development.