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Mahathir-English (with pix)

ENGLISH TO BE ALLOWED FOR TECHNOLOGICAL SUBJECTS, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government will allow English to be used as the medium of instruction for technological subjects in local universities and colleges as soon as possible.

He said the matter had been discussed by the Cabinet which decided that such measure was necessary if Malaysia were to remain competitive at the international level.

"We'll use English where necessary because we cannot let the efficiency and capability of our people to be lower than that of people in foreign countries," he told reporters after unveiling the names of the second national car and company here.

"Perodua Kancil" has been chosen as the name for the second national car which will be produced by Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd (Perodua). Commercial production for the 660cc car is targetted for September 1994, with an initial output of 20,000 units in the first year.

Dr Mahathir said the move was also necessary because of the shortage of people capable of translating technical books into Bahasa Melayu and in this respect it would be much more convenient for the people if they were proficient in English. --more

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Mahathir-English 2 Kuala Lumpur

"So, from the practical point of view, we need to master English. We are of the opinion that once we have emerged as a successful race, our language will also gain the respect.

"But for an unsuccessful race, their language will not gain the respect of others eventhough they hold dearly to it," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia must give priority to this "because we cannot allow our country to be left behind. Or else, we will not be competitive".

He said the greenlight to use English for teaching of technical subjects like engineering and medicine would be implemented as soon as possible.

Asked whether universities could now decide themselves or wait for the government's directive before deciding the medium of instruction for a particular subject, he said: "We've not determined yet but this is the approach we will take." --more

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On the possibility that the Universities and University Colleges Act be amended for the purpose, Dr Mahathir said the government had no intention to do so as yet.

He said the government was willing to study the matter if necessary although it had no specific reason.

Asked on the intention of the University of London to set up a branch campus here, he said it could if it observed the laws.

The setting up of the branch campus might not require amendments to the Universities and University Colleges Act, he said. --Bernama

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▼27/12/16-21MST