

# English to be medium

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — The Government has decided to allow the use of English as the medium of instruction in some subjects at universities and colleges in the country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the matter had been discussed by the Cabinet which agreed that this new approach was necessary if Malaysia was to remain competitive at the international level.

"We will allow the use of English where necessary, especially in engineering and medical subjects. We cannot allow the efficiency and capability of our people to be lower than those in other countries," he added.

Dr Mahathir said this to reporters after unveiling the name of the second national car and the corporate logo of the company producing it.

"From the pragmatic point of view, we need to do

it. It is the Government's opinion that once we have become a successful race, our language by itself will gain the respect of others.

"On the other hand, a race which is not successful will not be able to gain the respect for its language even though they hold strongly to it," he said.

For example, Dr Mahathir said, Malaysia was unable to translate technical books to Bahasa Malaysia because there were not enough capa-

## of instruction in some subjects

ble people.

"It is much easier for us to become proficient in English," he added.

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".

Asked how soon the new approach would be implemented, Dr Mahathir said the Government hoped to see it done as soon as possible.

On whether universities could now decide themselves or wait for the Government's directive before deciding the medium of instruction for a particular subject, Dr Mahathir said the Government had not gone into detail on the specifics but added that this was the approach it would take.

Asked whether there were plans to amend the Universities and University Colleges Act, Dr Mahathir

said there was none at the moment.

"We will study whether there is a need to do so. However, there is no specific reason to do it," he added.

Asked on the proposal by the University of London to set up a branch campus here, he said it was possible but it would have to observe the laws.

The setting up of the branch campus might not require amendments to the Universities and University

Colleges Act, he said.

University of Malaya Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Taib Osman, when asked to comment on the Government's decision, said the university would wait for the official announcement.

"Presently, the university does conduct some courses in English largely because of the foreign lecturers serving with us. Obviously, they will have to teach in English," he said.