

Bahasa policy stays

9
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By Jeffrey Ramayah
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Government's decision to allow English to be used as the medium of instruction for science and technological subjects in institutions of higher learning stays, but reiterated it will not be at the expense of Bahasa Malaysia.

The Umno president said after the meeting of the party's supreme council that the position of Bahasa Malaysia as outlined in the National Education Policy would remain.

Responding to a question from the Press, he said: "The Malay intellectuals have accepted that in the pursuit of knowledge, we have to take certain measures (to ensure that our objectives are achieved)."

He was asked whether the Congress of Malay Intellectuals accepted the decision to allow the use of English in the teaching of science and technological subjects which he announced on Dec 27.

tion were still practised in the country.

Yesterday, Anwar said there would be no change in the policy concerning the use of Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction.

He said, however, serious efforts would be made to improve both the standards of Bahasa Malaysia and English at all levels.

He had said this after a two-hour closed-door meeting with members of the congress.

During the meeting, Wan Hashim also presented a memorandum rejecting any move to introduce English as a medium of instruction for science and technological subjects, but accepted the fact that English and other languages were important.

The intellectuals, most of whom teach at the universities and other institutions of higher learning, admitted that the standards of Bahasa Malaysia and English had to be improved.

Also at the meeting with Anwar were Malay corporate figures, journalists, writers and lawyers.

The Prime Minister said the congress, which met on Jan 5, had submitted a memorandum and this was discussed at today's meeting.

"We thank them for their suggestions and views and will take them into consideration," he said.

Later today, the congress issued a statement saying it was happy with the Prime Minister's assurance that there would be no changes to the education and language policies.

Its secretary, Datuk Prof Wan Hashim Wan Teh, said although the issue had raised some controversy, the integrity of Dr Mahathir and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had settled it.

He added that this clearly demonstrated that democracy, consensus and co-opera-

Dr Mahathir also said the Government did not propose to introduce national service as a means to overcome the problem of indiscipline like loafing among youths.

However, the Government was in favour of voluntary organisations providing training and drill practices to instil discipline in youths.

"The issue of national service was discussed at length in the media and we feel there is no need to introduce it. Youths can be trained in various forms of discipline by voluntary organisations."

Dr Mahathir said youngsters should be organised to undertake activities along the lines of the Outward

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Move to train idle youths

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Bound school.

"Such activities should be attractive and should benefit them," he said.

"We may also establish a voluntary body to ensure that youths who are idle are imparted with skills and training to enable them to utilise their time more fruitfully.

"We want them to be organised in their daily routines," he said.

Youth and Sports Minister Ghani Othman said in Muar yesterday that the Government would enlist the services of institutions of higher learning in the country to help the ministry undertake a study on the habits of youths and determine the actual number of youths wasting their time at shopping centres and malls.

He said a study on the actual number of youths involved in this habit was vital to enable the ministry to plan programmes for them and give them appropriate attention.

With the participation of the institutions of higher learning, the study could be more comprehensive and not confined to Kuala Lumpur alone, he said.