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Mahathir-Schools

CHINESE EXTREMISTS HINDERING UNITY PROCESS- DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 4 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Chinese education extremists who have rejected the Vision School concept are in fact hindering the process of uniting the various races in Malaysia.

The Prime Minister said the government would continue with the Vision Schools with a view to uniting the people of this country, starting at the school level.

"We feel that the Vision School will not obstruct the progress of Chinese schools in Malaysia."

"The Vision School concept is to unite the people and has nothing to do with the Chinese language or Chinese schools," he told reporters after launching the Internet Arcnet NTT MSC service here.

Dr Mahathir said Chinese education extremists were not in any way defending the Chinese language or learning in the Chinese language as the government had already guaranteed this.

It had even amended the Education Act to withdraw the powers of the Education Minister to change the status of Chinese schools to national schools, he said.

The Vision School is a concept which groups the national and Chinese as well as Tamil national type schools in one area with pupils sharing the same school facilities.

However each of the schools would continue to use its respective medium of instruction --- national schools (Malay language), Chinese schools (Mandarin) and Tamil schools (Tamil Language).

The Government had given an assurance that this would not affect the identity of each of the schools but was aimed at bringing the various races closer through more interaction.

The Prime Minister said the government was aware of the need to build more Chinese schools in the country in view of the increasing Chinese population.

"So we have to have schools and at the same time we will have to think of our country's future with people of the various races living together, starting at the school level," he said.

In this way, the various races in Malaysia would be able to maintain good relations, the Prime Minister said.

The Prime Minister said he would continue with his criticism of extremists in this country, be they Malays, Chinese or Indians as Malaysia had no place for extremists.

He said the Chinese education extremists formed only a small group but they had acted as though they wanted to threaten the government.

Members of this group were acting as though they did not acknowledge themselves as Malaysian citizens and the need for them to mix with Malaysians of other races, he said.

"They want everything to be segregated...Chinese schools to be separated from other schools to the extent of Chinese schools becoming foreign schools and not schools within Malaysia."

"Chinese schools in Malaysia are Malaysian schools even though they use Chinese as the medium of instruction," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government would not abort the Vision School project just as it did not drop the plan to have university students of various races staying together as this also represented part of the

integration process.  
-- BERNAMA  
AFY AHH AAM