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English-Support

GROUPS EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR PM'S STATEMENT ON ENGLISH

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 29 (Bernama) -- Various groups today expressed support for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement that learning the English language does not make a person less of a nationalist.

National Union of Teaching Profession (NUTP) secretary-general N. Siva Subramaniam said that the mastery of English was crucial for Malaysians to compete in the international arena.

He told Bernama here today that the Education Ministry's effort to improve the command of English was met with setbacks such as the misconception that a true nationalist would never learn English, the colonialist language.

Dr Mahathir was reported as saying that there was a wrong impression by some people that learning English was tantamount to being disloyal and unpatrotic.

In an interview with Bernama last Tuesday, Dr Mahathir said that a true nationalist was someone who has mastered all the knowledge and the skills and was capable of contesting against the rest of the world.

Siva Subramaniam supported the government's plan to get the help of foreign teachers if the need arise as the irony was that many of the English language teachers that were produced today were not very proficient in the language themselves.

However, he said that the government could tap into the resources in the country such as the many retired English language teachers who had mastered the English language from their studies during the colonial era.

Siva Subramaniam said these teachers with a high proficiency level of English could be enlisted to train the new breed of English language teachers lacking the exposure and experience of an English education background.

Meanwhile, the national exco of the Malaysian Association of Youth Clubs (MAYC) Sheikh Badar Sheikh Embong said that he lauded Dr Mahathir's statement, saying that it was very timely.

He concurred with the prime minister that learning English does not make one unpratiotic and said that Malaysians need not worry that they would lose their Malaysian identity if they learn the English language.

Sheikh Badar, who is also MAYC's ex-secretary general, said that knowledge in any form must be learnt and mastered, be it the English language or any other languages.

In fact, he said that Islam wants its follower to acquire knowledge and the English language is a form of knowledge that must be mastered by Malaysians for them to become world players.

-- BERNAMA

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