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Varsities

MINISTRY NOT FORCING PRIVATE VARSITIES TO USE BAHASA MELAYU MORE

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 15 (Bernama) -- Local private universities will not be compelled to implement proposals for greater use of the national language, Bahasa Malaysia, in their courses, said Education Ministry Parliamentary Secretary Datuk Mahadzir Mohamed Khir.

Instead the ministry would rather discuss the best way towards that end with the universities concerned, he said.

"We'll not force them but we want them to regard the proposal as a challenge to attract more local students to enrol with them," he said elaborating to reporters the proposal.

Earlier, Mahadzir opened the Malaysian education exposition organised by the National Association of Private Education Institutions (Napei) in Petaling Jaya today.

There were already guidelines for for private universities on the use of Bahasa Malaysia for some of their courses such as Malaysian studies, and the ministry would want them to expand the usage to other courses since their enrolment was mostly made up of local undergraduates.

At a meeting two months ago between the ministry's Private Education Department and local private universities, the ministry conveyed its wish for the use of Bahasa Malaysia in their courses be increased by between 20 and 50 per cent.

The universities however found themselves in a dilemma and in turn wrote a memorandum to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed last month.

Napei president Dr Mohamed Thalha Haji Alithamby when approached by reporters at the same function said the association was awaiting response from the prime minister.

According to him, local private universities have already conducted two courses in Bahasa Malaysia of the 24 courses offered.

Moreover, such proposal would be difficult to implement as most of the courses involved franchised or twinning programmes, he said.

"Most of the external examiners do not understand Bahasa Malaysia and it would be difficult for us to translate all for them to check," Mohamed Thalha said.

Implementing the proposal would only discourage foreign students from joining local private universities and defeat the government's objective of making Malaysia the regional centre of excellence for higher education, he added.

-- BERNAMA

AT AHH RYN