

25 AUG 2001

Mahathir-Schools

ALL SCHOOLS TO HAVE SINGLE SESSION

IPOH, Aug 25 (Bernama) -- All schools in the country will become single-session schools but the process will take time, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said there were now 600 single-session schools and 600 more would be added soon.

"Now we have nearly 9,000 primary and secondary schools... we have to duplicate. (It'll) take some time, other countries don't even have schools," he told reporters at the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport here before returning to Kuala Lumpur.

Dr Mahathir and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali were here to witness the biggest Malaysian flag and to attend the patriotic gathering of secondary school student leaders.

He said schools in Malaysia had all the facilities because the government had given large allocations for education in its annual budget whereas some countries spent a lot on defence.

Earlier, when addressing the 5,000-odd student leaders, Dr Mahathir said all the single-session schools would be equipped with computers and would become smart schools.

"This is to provide knowledge to future generations which will take over from the present generation. I hope that the young generation will be receptive to this effort," he said.

Dr Mahathir also told the reporters that the government was willing to consider applications to open private universities in the country.

"If they meet the requirements, have ample funds and there's a demand, we can consider," he said when commenting on the approval given to the MCA to set up Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman.

He said the approval was given not for the Chinese or because the MCA was a political party but to upgrade the Tunku Abdul Rahman College.

On the flag sewn by the students, teachers and parent-teacher association of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Seri Ampang (SMKSA) which made it into the Malaysia Book of Records as the biggest flag in the country, Dr Mahathir said it was a good sign of the patriotism of Malaysians.

"This shows that Malaysians accept the Jalur Gemilang as the symbol of our nation. They compete to show their appreciation of the national symbol," he added.

The RM65,000 flag measures 108m by 159m and weighs nearly three tonnes. The world record for the biggest flag is 77m x 154m.

It took 21 days to sew and will be displayed at the Ipoh field. The previous record was held by students of Universiti Putra Malaysia since April 2 this year.

Dr Mahathir, who viewed the flag at Sekolah Tunku Abdul Rahman (STAR), also signed the certificate for the biggest flag in the Malaysia Book of Records.

Perak also chalked up another record in the book with the biggest symphony orchestra performance by 300 students and teachers from the Kinta district.

-- BERNAMA

AR JK