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Mahathir-Education

SINGLE STREAM EDUCATION IS BEING PRACTISED- DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 19 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister said today the single stream education system is already being practised in Malaysia through the National School System.

"We already have the single stream school....many people do not understand that we already have the National School System," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said when the government formed the national school system, there were already Chinese and Tamil stream schools.

He said the government gave aid to these Chinese and Tamil stream schools so that they need not close down in the hope that the students would eventually join the national schools.

Dr Mahathir said this, when asked to comment on the proposal that the government set up single stream schools, after chairing the Dewan Rakyat pre-council meeting for Barisan Nasional representatives at Parliament House here.

The Prime Minister said what happened later was the national schools were perceived as being controlled by people who tried to turn these schools into Islamic religious schools.

"This resulted in Chinese and Indians losing interest in going to the national schools."

"We pledged to have people's own language teachers but we were unable to supply them but this did not come about through government policy," he said.

"We are going to train more teachers...please persuade the people to join the teaching profession and become teachers for their own language."

"We want them to learn their own language. This is one country in Southeast Asia or perhaps the only country in the world where the language of the non-Bumiputera are actually provided for and encouraged by the government," Dr Mahathir said.

Dr Mahathir was confident that if the national schools "were made more attractive" more Indian and Chinese students would be interested in joining these schools.

"We will ensure that Muslim students do not try to force non-Muslims to follow their lifestyle such as forcing non-Muslims to wear the headscarf or tudung and so on," he said.

"They will get the same education and also learn their mother tongue and there will be no pressure on them to accept the customs and ways of the Muslims," the Prime Minister said.

-- BERNAMA

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