

Cabinet discusses re-introduction of English-medium school system

Nst - 9 MAY 2002

By Annie Freeda Cruz
anniefca@nstp.com.my

PUTRAJAYA, Wed. The Cabinet today discussed the re-introduction of the English-medium school system to arrest the decline in the subject, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"We did touch on the topic but it was not discussed at length as we want to hear what the people have to say on the subject," he said after hosting lunch for Lebanese Prime Minister Kafic Hariri and his 51-member delegation at Sri Perdana today.

Dr Mahathir said the Government was serious about getting public reaction on the issue.

The Prime Minister said some

people were claiming that they could not get jobs because they were not proficient in English and the Government wanted to ascertain whether this was true or not.

He said if people still wanted to give priority to the national language rather than improve their chances of getting employment, then the Government would abide by it.

Asked whether a study would be conducted on the re-introduction of the English-medium school system besides getting public feedback, Dr Mahathir said this would be carried out and many people would be involved in the study.

On Monday, Dr Mahathir said the Government was willing to re-introduce the English-medium school system to arrest the decline in the

subject following repeated calls to the Government to do so to ensure Malaysia continues to have a competitive edge in the international arena.

With less emphasis given to English in recent years, the Prime Minister had said, the Government found that those lacking a good command of the language were handicapped in facing challenges of the new economy.

To a question as to why Singapore was not included in the agreement signed yesterday to jointly fight terrorism, transnational crimes and illegal cross-border activities in the region, Dr Mahathir said: "Not yet, maybe later."

He said Philippine President Glo-

□ TURN TO PAGE 2, COL 4

Dr Mahathir: We can't interfere with Indon court ruling

Nst - 9 MAY 2002

□ FROM PAGE ONE

ria Macapagal Arroyo was interested to co-operate with Moro Islamic Liberation Front, but he added: "We also know that in south Philippines, the Muslim people were not united.

"If one party wants peace while another tries to prevent it... it worries her (Arroyo)," he added.

The agreement on Exchange of Information and Establishment of Communication Procedures was signed in the presence of Dr Mahathir and Arroyo at the Prime Minister's Department.

The agreement, another effort to complement the Asean mechanism against terrorism and transnational crimes, is intended to establish a framework to facilitate co-operation and inter-operability among signatory nations.

Asked to comment on an Indonesian court sentencing Malaysian Taufik Abdullah Halim @ Dani to death for involvement in a bombing last year at a Central Jakarta shopping mall, Dr Mahathir said: "We cannot interfere in the court's decision.

"We must accept the conviction, even though it is on a Malaysian. When we go to another country, we must be careful not to violate its laws."

Dr Mahathir said if an Indonesian came to Malaysia and committed murder, then he would have to face the death penalty, according to the local laws.

Yesterday, the Central Jakarta district court convicted Dani for taking part in the bombing at the Atrium Senen mall on Aug 1.

He lost a leg when the bomb he was carrying exploded prematurely. It also injured four others.