

# 'English usage not politically motivated'

KUALA LUMPUR: The teaching of Mathematics and Science in English in schools starting next year is not a political decision to undermine the culture or identity of the different communities in the country.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the move was made based on the realisation that English was the main language for learning in the world.

"The Government is totally committed towards implementing the teaching of Mathematics and Science in English. This is not politics.

"We cannot keep on translating the thousands of books, articles and reference materials. We have to acknowledge that English is the language of learning today just like Arabic and Latin in the past and we have to accept that reality whether we like it or not," he

told reporters after opening Utar yesterday.

He was asked whether there was a shift in the government's decision to press ahead with the plan despite objections by many quarters.

Commenting on the statement by PAS acting president Datuk Seri Hadi Awang opposing the plan, Dr Mahathir said:

"That is PAS. Whenever we want to do something positive, its leaders are sure to politicise it, even to the point of being traitorous. They will oppose whatever we do and will incite the people to oppose by using all kinds of excuses."

Hadi had said PAS would work with the Chinese groups to oppose the plan as it felt that the move was done in haste and that it was designed to cover up the failure in the implementation of the National Education Policy.

On the difference within Barisan Nasional on the issue, Dr Mahathir said the matter could be resolved internally within the coalition.

On another issue, Dr Mahathir said the Federal Government would take action against the PAS government in Terengganu if it broke any law in implementing its version of *hudud* laws.

Asked whether the new contract for the Bakun dam project had been awarded, Dr Mahathir said he was not in the know, but expressed hope that it would be made soon.

Speculation is rife that Cahya Mata Sarawak Bhd is the likely candidate to be awarded the contract for the RM9bil project together with Gamuda Bhd, Bhundai Engineering of South Korea and Alstom Power Generation of Switzerland.