

ENGLISH FORMULA

STAR 23 AUG 2002

Dr M: Implementation method for language use to be decided later

By SIMON KHOO

NILAI: The Government is determined to proceed with its proposal to use English to teach Science and Mathematics in all schools from next year but how this will be implemented will be decided later, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said Barisan Nasional component parties had discussed the matter with his deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"We will listen to their views and make an assessment after studying their feedback, before making a decision.

"They did not ask for the implementation (in national-type schools) to be withdrawn but rather how it is to be done," Dr Mahathir told reporters after performing the ground-breaking ceremony for Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia (KUIM) here yesterday.

On Wednesday, the heads of four Chinese-based Barisan Nasional component parties met Dr Mahathir ahead of the weekly Cabinet meeting to discuss the Government's move to improve English in schools.

The 30-minute meeting was described as constructive and, according to sources, Dr Mahathir also gave his views on the matter.

The meeting was attended by MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, Sarawak United People's Party president Tan Sri Dr George Chan and Sabah Progressive Party president Datuk Yong Teck Lee.

According to the sources, the leaders believed that Dr Mahathir

would offer a formula that would take into account the views of all the communities.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir again cautioned certain quarters against using racial sentiments to instigate the people, warning that they could face stern action under the law.

"If they continue to harp on the issue to create anxiety among the

people or get involved in illegal activities, then we will not hesitate to take the necessary action.

"The important thing to remember is that if they claim that the Government has the intention to change Chinese national-type schools to national schools or somewhere along this line, whereas the

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Groups to present views on proposal

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law clearly does not permit this, then we will act.”

Present at the ground-breaking ceremony were his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad, Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad, KUIM chairman Tan Sri Dr Mohamad Yusof Noor and KUIM rector Datuk Dr Abdul Shukor Husin.

In Kuala Lumpur, sources said several Malay organisations representing academicians, writers and youths would meet Abdullah tomorrow over the Government's English usage proposal.

The dialogue, to be held at the Umno headquarters, is to

enable the groups, including a few which had opposed the proposal, to present their views to Abdullah.

The organisations include Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Gapena (the Federation of Malay Writers), the Malay Journalists Association, Gabungan Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung (GPMS the Federation of Peninsular Malaysia Students), university lecturers and representatives from university student councils.

Sources said PAS, which had opposed the use of English to teach the two subjects, had not been invited.

GPMS secretary-general Syed Anuar Syed Mohamad confirmed that he would attend the meeting.