

PM: No new education policies

STAR 1 0 OCT 2002

By ZULKIFLI ABD RAHMAN

KUALA LUMPUR: The Government has no intention of introducing new education policies that will harm the future of Malaysians, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said the Government would not sack teachers and close schools just because people wanted to continue using their mother tongue in education.

He said that all Malaysians must one day learn English because much of the world's knowledge in Science and Mathematics was communicated in books and journals written in English.

He was speaking at a mammoth gathering organised by Federation of Malaysian Chinese Associations at Stadium Putra in Bukit Jalil here last night.

About 10,000 people, mostly Chinese, attended the gathering to support the Government's effort to create a knowledgeable society. Also present were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and several ministers.

Dr Mahathir said the Government would not hastily implement the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English at national-type schools, adding that the Government had never victimised the people.

"It's not true that we are abolishing the usage of your mother tongue in your schools. I beg of you not to politicise the country's education policy, because education is important for you and your country.

"We want to create a new generation of Malaysians who are well-educated and able to

compete with the developed world."

Dr Mahathir said that those who studied English did not have to become like the English.

"I learnt English not because I'm an Englishman. I may have studied medicine in English, but I'm 100% Malay and 100% Malaysian. And I can still speak good Malay," he said.

He said that teachers should not have problems teaching English in classes as they could be assisted by modern computer technology which could translate the language quickly.

Dr Mahathir later received a greeting card signed by the association's members from chairman Liew Poon Siak. The card was in support of the Government's plan to implement the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English.