

# Dr M: Vision School meant to rectify past mistakes

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PETALING JAYA: Ideas like the Vision School are aimed at rectifying past mistakes in efforts to integrate the various races, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister, citing an example of an error, said that to promote national integration, the Government had in the 1970s set up national schools.

He said the Government had hoped the schools would attract students from all races when they were converted from English-medium to Bahasa Malaysia.

"Unfortunately, we have failed to do so. Why? Because some people thought they should use the national schools for the advancement of one race only," he said.

He said that these people focused not on making it a national school system but a Malay school system.

"As a result, most of the Chinese and Indian students

left," he said during a conference entitled *Learning From South Korea: Sustaining Growth in a Dynamic Environment*, held at the Sunway Convention Centre here yesterday.

Added to this, the people responsible for changing the focus of the schools from national to Malay, did not send their children to these schools.

"They themselves have no faith in the (national) schools. Many Malays now prefer to send their children to religious schools instead of national schools," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the situation needed to be rectified quickly.

"That is why we have ideas like the Vision Schools. These are failure correction (methods).

"We have to make corrections to failures. If we leave it like that, then we will fail again," he added.

On a related matter, the

National Union of Teaching Profession has called on parent-teachers' associations to write to the Prime Minister on shortcomings that would be faced by their schools in implementing the teaching of Mathematics and Science in English.

Raslan Baharom, reporting from Taiping, quoted NUTP secretary-general Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam as saying that PTAs had an important role in ensuring that the policy is carried out effectively.

Speaking to reporters after meeting union members on the Malaysian Remuneration System, he called on opponents to the new policy to set aside their narrow-mindedness and political interests.

"For the old generation, our time is over; let us give the young generation a better future by encouraging them to be good in English," he said, adding that students were all for the new policy.