

# BN consensus sought

SUN 22 OCT 2002

Discuss rationally and decide on English issue, says Mahathir

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## Don't take advantage of tolerance, Aziz warns MCA

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son committee meeting.

He was asked if the MCA's decision is a political threat as it was announced on the eve of the BN Supreme Council meeting and cabinet meeting which are expected to make a final decision on the matter.

Abdullah said the question of coercion has never existed within BN as the coalition will always take into account all proposals and suggestions before reaching consensus.

Asked if he is confident that the supreme council meeting today will reach a consensus, he said: "It was never a problem within BN to reach a consensus."

Deputy Education Minister Datuk Abdul Aziz Shamsudin, meanwhile, reminded the MCA not to take advantage of the tolerance practised in the country and act outside of the established framework.

If there is an abuse of this spirit of tolerance, he warns, the country stands to lose and there will be "dire consequences".

"If the Malays, Chinese or Indians abuse tolerance they will face big problems," he said in Port Dickson when commenting on the MCA's decision.

"Any person who is unable to overcome his emotions will face problems. We have not heard about the entire Chinese community opposing the move; only the views of some of their leaders." *Bernama* quoted him as saying.

**PETALING JAYA:** The prime minister wants Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties to discuss rationally the issue of teaching science and mathematics in English and they should reach a consensus on the matter.

"If we want to reject, we reject. If we want to accept, we accept. We want to modify, we modify. Whatever it is, let's make a decision together," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said last night at the RMAF base in Subang upon returning from visits to India, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

He was asked to comment on the differences of opinions expressed by certain BN component parties on the issue.

The MCA Central Committee had on Friday unanimously rejected the proposal. Its president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said he was in favour of promoting English proficiency among students but it should start only in secondary schools.

Mahathir said he had avoided making statements on the issue despite people asking him what he was going to do.

"I said wait, wait, wait, because I want to get a feel of these things so that people will know. We have no political axe to grind. All we want to do is what is good for Malaysia and Malaysians," he said.

The BN Supreme Council will meet today to discuss the plan which will start in Year One, Form One and Form Six next year.

Mahathir said the whole idea of the BN is that it allows member parties to discuss things rationally and reach a consensus agreement.

"If we sideline BN and make a decision, this does not show the unity of the Barisan Nasional," he said.

Earlier yesterday, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the MCA should not make a "political threat" by deciding to oppose the move to teach science and mathematics in English in primary schools from next year.

He hopes that the party, through its central committee, is only stating its stand when it voted unanimously to reject the proposal, reports *Husna Yusop*.

"I hope it is not to the extent of MCA wanting to threaten the government or Barisan Nasional (BN). They are only voicing their opinion and we will resolve it.

"Once it is resolved and everyone has agreed to it, we hope all will be united," Abdullah said yesterday after launching Cheras Education Foundation's website and attending the Federal Territory Umno liai-

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