

Dr M: Give BN a chance to discuss issues

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PETALING JAYA: Barisan Nasional component parties should give the coalition's supreme council the chance to discuss issues before declaring their individual stand, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said the whole idea of Barisan was for all component parties to discuss issues and try to reach a consensus.

"A consensus may not be what people outside would say. If (Barisan) may reject or modify (decisions) but let's give Barisan a chance to discuss the matter," he told reporters on arrival home from an overseas trip at the Air Force base in Subang here last night.

Commenting on the different stand taken by some component parties regarding the move to teach Science and Mathematics in English in schools, Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan chairman, said it did not reflect the unity of Barisan for component parties to declare their stand separately.

He said the Barisan supreme council meeting today

would discuss the issue.

Dr Mahathir said he had refrained from making any decision on the matter although there were opportunities to do so.

"In my speeches, I explain that our aim is to make a joint decision with all component parties. I did not say the decision must be such and such.

"I said it will be good if we can reach a decision which reflects our stand, that's the concept of Barisan Nasional.

"If we don't agree, we don't. If we agree, we agree, but whatever decisions we make, let's make it within Barisan," he added.

Dr Mahathir said there were no political axes to grind within Barisan.

"All we want to do is what is good for Malaysia and what is good for Malaysians. If Malaysians say it is no good, then we don't do it. If they say it is good, then we will do it. Whatever it is, the decision should be reached by the Barisan supreme council," he said.

Dr Mahathir said all component parties were free to air their views in the council.

"I have often emphasised that Barisan gives equal weight to all the parties, even small parties. In fact, one of the things that the whole world admires about Malaysia is how the different races can live together peacefully.

"And the reason is Barisan Nasional. We are not going to assimilate people, we are not going to form one single party. We are going to have parties representing different views," he said.