

# English for all schools

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**SUN 23 OCT 2002**

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties have reached a consensus that science and mathematics be taught in English in all schools, including Chinese primary schools, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The prime minister, however, said implementation of the policy in Chinese primary schools might be slightly different, using an approach they think is suitable for them, but still in the same spirit.

He said BN's Chinese-based components have asked for a week to discuss among themselves or consult other relevant parties to come up with the best approach to implement the proposal in Chinese schools.

"We want to try so that next year we can start together with the Chinese schools, using the approach they are going to decide. There are no problems with other schools; everybody has agreed," he told a media conference after chairing the BN Supreme Council meeting.

Mahathir, who is also BN chairman, said after holding consultations, the Chinese-based parties would report to him on any changes or counter-proposals deemed suitable for the Chinese community's interests.

He insisted that the BN has reached a consensus as everyone has agreed to the

approaches to be taken "although it may look as if the Chinese parties are different".

The prime minister said the government's intention is for all schools to implement the policy together from the next school year.

Asked if Chinese primary schools might be given an exemption, he said "no", as they were only given some time to find ways how to resolve the matter.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, whose party central committee unanimously rejected the proposal last Friday, said the Chinese-based parties will decide on the model of implementation of the policy.

"We will discuss whether we will continue

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in Chinese or part English or any other model," he said.

Pressed for further explanation, he said: "Don't speculate ... don't speculate. We will come back in one week."

Mahathir also said that the BN decided to amend its constitution to allow for the formation of its own youth and women's wings and also for the ruling coalition to have a deputy chairman.

"We have agreed that Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will be the deputy chairman so that once I am not around, the meeting can be held without having another meeting to appoint a chairman."