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BN reaches consensus (HL)

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PORT KLANG, Tues. - Barisan Nasional component parties today reached a consensus on the proposal to use English in the teaching of Mathematics and Science in schools from next year, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

It is learnt that the consensus was that the two subjects be taught in English at secondary schools.

The consensus was reached at a meeting of BN component party leaders held earlier in the morning at Abdullah's Putrajaya office.

"They conveyed to me their stand and I told them that I would convey it to the Prime Minister who is the BN chairman."

He said this after his visit to North Port, where he launched Container Terminal 3 and Super post panamax cranes at Wharf 12.

It is understood that Abdullah will brief Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tomorrow morning.

Abdullah, the BN deputy chairman, said Dr Mahathir would determine the time he would meet with the BN component party leaders.

Asked about the consensus, Abdullah said: "I am not at liberty to reveal anything. I think it is unfair and inappropriate for me to announce what transpired before I brief the Prime Minister."

Asked if there was a need for BN Chinese-based parties to meet again, Abdullah said that was up to them. "To me, today's meeting is sufficient."

He expressed confidence that Dr Mahathir would study the new development but declined to speculate on the outcome.

He advised BN leaders not to get into a public spat on the matter. He was referring to the name-calling that erupted yesterday between Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik and People's Progressive Party president Datuk M. Kayveas.

Sources said the meeting with Abdullah today was because of the unpleasantness that had arisen between the two.

Earlier in Malacca today, Abdullah said the meeting in his office was cordial.

"But personally, I hope that whatever meetings that transpire after this between the BN component leaders and Dr Mahathir will give rise to a positive outcome."

The BN component parties were represented by either their president or representative at the meeting which began about 8.30am.

Abdullah said BN leaders should not make contradictory statements on the matter that caused confusion among the people. Such statements gave rise to misunderstandings among component parties.

"We do not want these statements to cause greater confusion and misunderstanding," he said, adding that everyone present at the meeting was given a chance to voice his opinion.

"So there is no longer a need to make further statements on the matter."

"If a discussion has to be held to find a solution, then hold it. But solutions cannot be obtained from making statements in the Press."

Abdullah was in Malacca to close the two-day Council of Former Wakil Rakyat Convention.

In his speech he said the Government's plan to use English to teach Mathematics and Science was a good move, aimed at improving the students' command of the language, especially among Malay students.

And it would ensure that they excelled in Mathematics and Science. "In

both Science and Mathematics, English is the dominant language. By doing this, it is hoped that our students will be able to master both subjects," he said.