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Mahathir-English

CABINET TO STUDY COUNTER-PROPOSALS ON USE OF ENGLISH

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Cabinet will study counter-proposals on the move to teach Science and Mathematics in English.

"We'll study everything," he said after attending the final of the F1 Powerboat World Championship at The Mines Resort City near here today.

Asked when proposals would be studied, the Prime Minister said: "I don't know yet, but we'll study."

He was asked to comment on several counter-proposals made on the proposed teaching of the two subjects in English from next year, including from Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties.

Yesterday, Gerakan rejected the move to teach Science and Mathematics in English in vernacular primary schools and instead suggested that English terminologies be introduced in textbooks in both subjects from Standard Four with some bilingual text to be used in Standards Five and Six.

Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said yesterday that the party's stand on the issue would be presented at the next Cabinet meeting and the next meeting of Chinese-based BN component parties.

On Friday, representatives of MCA, Gerakan, Sabah Progressive Party and Sarawak United People's Party discussed the matter but failed to reach a consensus.

Meanwhile, Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the movement would not stop anybody from debating the issue as long as it was not used to fan emotions.

"Umno Youth itself at the early stage had voiced concern on the aspects of implementation, teaching manpower, whether it is adequate or not and the schedule for implementation, and this we have discussed with the education authorities," he told reporters at the F1 powerboat event.

Hishammuddin urged all parties especially Chinese education movements not to link the matter with irrelevant issues when debating the subject.

"So, if you want to have proposals, you have ideas and how it can be done and implemented better, nobody is stopping you from doing that. But if you link that with racial and religious sentiments then it becomes dangerous," he said.

Asked whether the government would be receptive to the counter-proposals, Hishammuddin said Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad would be a better person to answer the question.

"Knowing Tan Sri Musa, and what he has briefed the Cabinet, what we are doing really is for the benefit of all races. What we are doing right now is to ensure that our youth and the future generations are able to use the English language to get more knowledge.

"It's not a question of the Chinese or the Malay identity; it's not the issue of the Malay or the Chinese language. But it is about questions and realities that in this world today, without a (good) command of the English language you are not able to absorb the available information that is out there, that is the issue," he said.

Hishammuddin believed that the Education Ministry would be willing to listen to proposals that would help in the implementation of the move.

-- BERNAMA

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