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Mahathir-English

DR M: I'M DISAPPOINTED OVER PEOPLE'S REFUSAL TO ACCEPT EDUCATION PLAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 14 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he is disappointed over the attitude of some people who do not want to accept the government's plan to develop the country's education system by using English to teach Science and Mathematics.

The Prime Minister said the government's plan was not to victimise anybody but to see multi-racial Malaysians moving together in achieving balanced progress in education.

"But what has happen to my race? our race," he asked when opening the Federal Territory Barisan Nasional (BN) Convention at Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here.

He said the people should be pragmatic and not be too emotional in determining what is best for them and the country.

"Think. Although we must have emotions and love for something but think of the common sense. Don't let your emotions cloud your judgement," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said Malaysians were free to practise their respective cultures, religions and mother tongues.

Nevertheless, with the rapid advancement in knowledge, every race must sacrifice to ensure the masses were not left behind, he said.

"We know this is the Science and Technology era and Science and Mathematics are important subjects which we can learn in our own language but the knowledge in other languages is becoming advanced at a rapid pace to the extent that we cannot catch up," he said.

Dr Mahathir said many books and journals in various fields written by experts are being published but Malaysians cannot benefit fully because they are written in English.

"I admit we have adequate words for translation and if not enough, we can create words but to create words, we need three skills.

"If we want to translate from English to Bahasa Malaysia, we must be an expert in English and Bahasa Malaysia as well as the field concerned.

"We can do it but can we translate all the knowledge being used now?" he asked.

Dr Mahathir chided the attitude of certain quarters who were apprehensive that their children would lose the racial identity by learning English.

"We will not become Englishmen just because our children learn English," he said, citing himself as an example of a person who had studied in English stream but still had Malay characteristics.

Dr Mahathir said if changes were not made, the government's plan to turn Malaysia into a developed country in 2020 would not materialise.

"Even if we make it, it will be only half-way, the other half will remain poor," he added.

-- BERNAMA

NM MAM TS