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Mahathir-English

CHINESE ASSOCIATIONS WANT ENGLISH TO BE USED IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS ONLY

PUTRAJAYA, Sept 2 (Bernama) -- Two associations representing the Chinese community met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today to present their view that the teaching of Mathematics and Science in English should be implemented only in the secondary schools.

Dr Mahathir said the Associated Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Malaysia and the Federation of Clans and Associations of Malaysia, which represents seven Chinese associations, felt that it would be easier for the primary school pupils to understand the two subjects in their mother tongues.

"It doesn't matter, we'll listen to their views and that of everyone. Then we will study all the views thoroughly," he told a media conference after the one-hour meeting with 20 representatives of the two bodies at his office, here.

He said the two associations supported the government's move to raise the standard of English by suggesting various methods like increasing the periods for Englishing and having a new curriculum.

Dr Mahathir said the government had made preparations for the teaching of the two subjects in English next year using information technology.

This method stressed more on the role of the teacher as a facilitator using the course-ware provided as a teaching tool without needing to have full command of the language.

"With this method, the students only have to learn the subjects guided by the programme on the screen or wall. The teacher, as facilitator, only has to press the button. Both the students and the teacher get to learn through this method," he said.

He said that what worried him now was whether the government could channel all the course-ware and other technical assistance to the schools concerned before next year.

He said the Education Ministry had only four months left to prepare the teaching aids for supply to all the schools.

The ministry was now studying the best "course-ware" for the schools.

"If we cannot make it, we will inform (the public). Any decision will be announced later. What I hope is that the government's decision will not be viewed as favouring any party," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government had tried to have uniformity in the country's education system by setting up the national schools but they were not well-received.

He said that only two per cent of the Chinese community and three per cent of the Indian community sent their children to the national schools while the Malays preferred to send their children to the religious schools.

He said that whenever the government wanted to introduce something in the national schools, the other schools must also follow suit to create uniformity.

"The Chinese education associations must accept that this is Malaysia, not China, Taiwan or Singapore. As such, its education system must have uniformity," he said.

Not only did the government have no intention to abolish the Chinese schools but such a move was also not permitted by the country's laws, he said.

ACCCIM president Tan Sri Lim Guan Teck said the association appreciated the prime minister's willingness to hear their views on the matter.

He said that the association agreed in principle that the standard of English in schools should be improved and fully supported the government's efforts to raise the command of English among the students.

He said the Chinese primary schools had shown good results in Science and Mathematics and the association felt that this should be maintained.

However, it had no objections if the two subjects were taught in English in the secondary schools next year, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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