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Government firm on teaching subjects in English

PORT DICKSON, Mon. - The Government will go ahead with its plan to implement the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English in all national schools beginning next year despite objections from several quarters.

Deputy Education Minister Datuk Abdul Aziz Samsuddin said the Government, however, "will not meddle in Chinese or Tamil (national-type) schools".

"These schools are controlled by their boards and we cannot interfere."

Aziz said the Government meant well when it decided to introduce the move. "Our Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) wants it to be implemented to enable the younger generation to face the challenging world."

He reminded those who opposed the move "not to abuse the tolerance blessed to Malaysians".

He said parties opposed to the move should not only think of themselves but the children and their future.

Aziz said preparation for the move had started in April.

"We have already given laptops to teachers. I am not disappointed (with these objections) but it is better for us to think rationally and not emotionally.

"So far, only Chinese community leaders have expressed objections towards the move. We will know of other objections once we have implemented the move next year."

Speaking after launching a game carnival for 1,000 special children in Padang Merdeka near here, he said generally all teachers involved in the move were ready and added: "I am very proud of them."

In Ipoh, Cuepacs urged the Government not to bow to pressure from political parties not supportive of the proposal to teach Science and Mathematics in English in primary schools.

Cuepacs president Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam said such an issue on education should not be politicised.

"It is important for the Government to establish a strong policy on the English language for the well-being of the present generation," he said after attending a Deepavali cultural night organised by a private college at a hotel here yesterday.

The Malaysian Tamil Education Research and Development Foundation also supported the Government's aim to raise the proficiency of English among students.

"We call on the Education Ministry to begin English lessons in Standard One instead of Standard Three as currently practiced," its pro-tem president M. Manogar said.

He said the foundation also wanted the ministry to introduce light literature studies to nurture the reading culture.