

06/09/2002

`Keep Malay as language of instruction'

TANJUNG MALIM, Thurs. - Malay language interest groups have proposed that Bahasa Melayu be maintained as the medium of instruction to teach Science and Mathematics in national schools.

They, however, agreed that English terminology should be introduced when teaching these subjects in Malay.

This was among the resolutions at the Sixth Malay Language and Literature Congress held at Dewan Tun Abdul Razak, near here, today.

More than 600 participants, mostly academicians and members of Malay language groups, attended the one-day congress, jointly organised by the Persatuan Linguistik Malaysia, Persatuan Penterjemahan Malaysia, Gapena and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

They fear that if English was used for these subjects, pupils would not be able to appreciate Malay as the language of knowledge and a tool for teaching.

They suggested that the method of teaching English be changed completely.

They said to improve the standard of English, the Government should set aside a special budget for it, train more teachers, introduce special teaching aids and create an English reading culture.

Congress spokesman Prof Datuk Dr Abdul Latiff Abu Bakar said the resolutions would be compiled into a memorandum and submitted to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as soon as possible.

He said while the congress fully supported the Government's efforts to improve the standard of English from primary level, it was equally important to retain Malay as the language of knowledge, communication and unity for Malaysians.

"The Malay language should be maintained in the education system because the language is as good as English and can be used as a medium of instruction, especially in Science and Mathematics.

"But because it cannot be denied that English is the world lingua franca, we support the Government's efforts that English language courses be emphasised."