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Ling-English

BN CHINESE-BASED PARTIES REACH AGREEMENT ON ENGLISH ISSUE

PUTRAJAYA, Oct 28 (Bernama) -- The four Chinese-based parties in the Barisan Nasional (BN) which oppose the introduction of the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English in Chinese schools have come up with a counter-proposal.

MCA president Datuk Ling Liong Sik said today that the counter-proposal would be submitted to the BN supreme council, which is expected to meet on Thursday.

"We took one week to fine-tune the proposal. We met a few times including with educationist and experts," he told reporters after presenting excellent service awards to the Transport Ministry staff at the ministry here.

Dr Ling, who is Transport Minister, said it was now up to the BN to make a final decision on the matter.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also the BN chairman, proposed two months ago that Science and Mathematics be taught in English in all schools in the country to boost the command of the language among Malaysians.

However, the implementation of the proposal was objected to by four Chinese-based parties in the ruling coalition due to fear that the mother tongue would have a reduced role in Chinese schools.

The four parties are the MCA, Gerakan, Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) and the Sabah Progressive Party.

According to the initial proposal, the teaching of the two subjects in English would begin in Standard One, Form One and Lower Six.

Pressed for details on the counter-proposal, Dr Ling said the media would have to wait until the BN supreme council meeting to have the nitty-gritty of the counter-proposal.

"Let the BN discuss and decide on it. I don't want to release it to the media but to the BN," he added.

Asked if the counter-proposal would burden students, he said: "They will be able to (study), given the right tools."

He also said that it was unlikely that the counter proposal would be tabled at the cabinet meeting this Wednesday.

"I am not sure (of tabling it at the cabinet). I think the BN will be involved as it has wider scope. It involves 14 parties, the cabinet does not have that representation.

"The BN always has ways to solve the problems. This is not the first time that we face some difficulty. There have been a lot of times," Dr Ling added.

-- BERNAMA

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