

29 OCT 2002

Rais-English

RESPECT THE MAJORITY VOICE, SAYS RAIS

PUTRAJAYA, Oct 29 (Bernama) -- The government should go ahead with its proposal to implement the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English in all schools in the country as the exercise has received the majority backing, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said today.

He said the government should not succumb to pressure from a minority that opposed the plan.

Calling on the minority group to exercise democracy, Rais said they should respect the decision of the majority.

"The teaching of Science and Maths in English once and for all will be adopted by the voice the majority. The minority ought to stand aside and give us the chance to perform," he told reporters after meeting representatives from the Umno Youth Public Complaints Bureau at his office here.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is 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.

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

Rais said the government had given ample room for various interest groups and parties to express their views on the education issue.

"I feel that the question of not hurting anyone's feelings is done with and a firm stand to implement a policy that is good for the country must be taken. And if the minority continues to threaten and divide the society, we have the medicine for them," he said.

Rais said the country's policy was approved by the government, which was elected, and therefore there should not be any objections from the minority group.

He said the act of the minority group could led to seditious tendencies and if it continued to harp on seditious matters, the operation of law could be applicable to it.

Rais, however, stressed that the government was very reluctant to use the instrument of law.

"We wouldn't like to use the instrument of law against anybody unless it's proven that the minority is not having the national interest at heart, but to create dissension in the society. If proven, we have no choice but to resort to law," he said.

On another note, Rais said the proposal to amend the Bankruptcy Act 1967 had been submitted to the Attorney-General's office.

He hoped that the amendments could be tabled in the Dewan Rakyat in March next year.

The review, among others, seeks to protect guarantors from being hounded by the banks for loan defaults loans by borrowers.

Rais said the proposed amendments would seek to have a provision that lenders could only go after guarantors if the borrowers were totally

untraceable.

It was also proposed that an individual would be deemed bankrupt if he incurred debts of RM30,000 instead of the present RM10,000.

Rais also assured the Umno Youth Public Complaints Bureau that the Prime Minister's Department would support and help the unit in handling the cases.

The bureau has handled about 300 cases since its inception a year ago.

-- BERNAMA

LES ZS JK