

05/09/2002

Science and Maths in English: All systems go

KUALA LUMPUR. Wed. - Textbooks, ICT teaching tools and teachers will be in place by next year whatever decision the Cabinet makes on the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English.

Saying it was "all systems go" in terms of preparations, Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad said the ministry would be able to meet any eventuality.

"The Cabinet will make a decision soon. I am confident that textbooks, ICT tools and teaching manpower will be ready in time," he said after the ministry's post-Cabinet meeting today.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said the Cabinet would decide on the matter soon.

Several quarters, including Chinese associations and political parties, have asked for the move to be introduced only in secondary school or Standard Four.

On claims by the Parent-Teacher Association of SJK (T) Serdang that the school's 93 pupils were made to sit the Primary School Assessment Test (UPSR) Bahasa Malaysia papers meant for national schools, Musa said it was the school's mistake and action would be taken against its administration.

"Nevertheless, it is not unusual for national-type school-children to sit the Bahasa Malaysia papers meant for national schools. Some 10 per cent of schools do this.

"In this case, the school had mistakenly applied for and confirmed its pupils to sit the papers meant for national schools. They only informed the Examination Syndicate three days before the exam on Monday of the mistake. It was too late for the syndicate to make any changes."

Musa said the Examination Syndicate would handle this case.

In a statement yesterday, the syndicate said it would give special consideration to the pupils who sat the 011 and 012 Bahasa Malaysia writing and comprehension papers.

According to PTA chairman A. Sivanesan, the school had mistakenly filled in the application form and then confirmed it. He said pupils were quarantined on the day of the examination and then made to sit the papers although parents protested against it.