

11 MAY 2002

Mahathir-English

UMNO PROPOSES "CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH LITERATURE" FOR STUDENTS

KUALA LUMPUR, May 10 (Bernama) -- The Umno Supreme Council (MT) today proposed that Contemporary English Literature be introduced to enhance the command of English among Bumiputera students and Malaysians in general.

It had also been proposed that Science and Mathematics subjects be taught in the English Language from primary school level, Prime Minister and Umno President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"Following the proposal, the government will introduce the learning of English seriously using a new approach in a situation where we do not have many teachers," he told reporters after chairing the MT meeting at the Umno Headquarters at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here.

He said the Umno Supreme Council felt that the reintroduction of English-medium schools to improve the command of English was not necessary as it was not in line with "our national education policy."

Dr Mahathir said effective teaching of English as well as the teaching of Mathematics and Science subjects in English would enable students to have a better command of the language.

The Prime Minister said the teaching of Science and Mathematics subjects in the English Language would be introduced as soon as possible.

Dr Mahathir said Umno realised that mastering the English Language by Bumiputeras in particular and Malaysians in general was very important in acquiring knowledge.

He said Malaysians must have a good and strong base in English so that they could speak and write well.

"At present we are facing problems....we need to negotiate with other countries about trade....command of English is very important in international relations and at times we have to use the English Language in agreement texts."

"If we do not understand English we will be trapped by the agreement and this will be a loss to us," Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister said even though Malaysia wished to use Bahasa Melayu as the text in agreements but other countries did not agree to it for in international agreements, ususally the English Language was used.

Command of the English Language was not limited to communicating but also developing a deep understanding of the language and being able to debate over choice of certain terms, he said.

Asked to clarify the MT's stance in rejecting calls to reintroduce English medium schools, with Dr Mahathir himself having asked the response from the public on the matter, the Umno president said: "If the whole country wants it (English medium schools), Umno which is a party that is fighting for the public has to follow. However this is our (MT) stand....our view."

"But if people want to oppos them, they still can. Not everyone supports Umno," he said.

-- BERNAMA

HS WNZ MAD AAM