

16 AUG 2002
Mahathir-Schools
VISION SCHOOLS PROMOTE UNITY

KUALA TERENGGANU, Aug 16 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the establishment of vision schools will be extended because the concept can promote racial unity.

The prime minister said he hoped that the vision schools would be fully accepted by the multiracial society in the country.

Under the vision school concept, the national, Chinese and Tamil schools are housed in one complex and share common facilities like canteens and playing fields.

Dr Mahathir said that the best way to bring the children of various races together and to encourage them to interact was to ensure that all the students studied in the national schools.

"However, we find that many (parents and students) are not interested because of too much politicking that the national schools now want to segregate the races, like for example, Muslims cannot mix with the non-Muslims," he said.

Because of this problem, the non-Muslims were not interested in studying in the national schools, Dr Mahathir, who is on a one-day visit to Terengganu, told a news conference, here.

Yesterday Education Ministry parliamentary secretary Datuk Mahadzir Mohamed Khir said that setting up vision schools nationwide was the best way to tackle the problem of racial polarisation in schools but this objective was hampered by opposition from some parties.

Earlier, when opening the Terengganu Barisan Nasional Convention, Dr Mahathir said PAS and the Chinese educationist movement, the Dong Jiao Zong, had conspired to oppose the government's efforts to enhance the knowledgeability of the Malays.

"PAS and the Dong Zong are the same. We cannot support these people. PAS wants the Malays to remain stupid and susceptible to their lies.

He said PAS disliked knowledgeable Malays because clever Malays would be wise to their ploy and reject them.

Asked about the BN's chances of wresting Terengganu from PAS in the next general election, he said the chances were bright.

"I think the support is very strong...different from 1999," he said.

-- BERNAMA
RAR SN JK