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'Other parties' views must be considered too'

ALOR STAR, Thurs. - Any proposal from Barisan Nasional component parties for Chinese schools to use English to teach Science and Mathematics only after school hours must take into account the willingness expressed by some Chinese-based parties for the schools to use English exclusively.

BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the proposal would also have to take into account the fact that the Government could not get Chinese schools which are already teaching the two subjects in English to revert back to Mandarin.

"I will have to wait until the proposal is (formally) made and I cannot decide on my own because the decision is made by the BN supreme council.

"I will have to call the BN supreme council to receive this proposal, because I find there are Chinese component parties which agree with the Government, like the Liberal Democratic Party which has come out in support openly and others too.

"In addition, there are Chinese schools which are even now teaching Science and Mathematics in English so we cannot force them to revert back to Mandarin," he said today after launching the Gerak Mesra and Tazkirah programme organised by the Islamic Dakwah Foundation of Malaysia (Yadim) and Kedah Umno here.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik claimed yesterday that Chinese-based parties in the BN were proposing that national-type Chinese schools be exempted from the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English during normal school hours.

Dr Ling said that the Chinese-based parties in the coalition would propose instead that the two subjects be taught in English outside normal school hours for national-type primary schools.

He also said the proposal was brought up during Tuesday's BN supreme council meeting with Chinese-based parties.

LDP president Datuk Chong Kah Kiat said yesterday that the party would not join the MCA, Gerakan, Sarawak United People's Party and Sabah Progressive Party in discussing the proposal.

Chong said the decision was in line with the party's stand to support whatever decision made by the Federal Cabinet on the matter.

In Slim River, Dr Ling said he would propose to the BN supreme council that the subjects be taught in English outside the normal timetable.

"It can be taught in English during the free periods or during headmaster's periods. It need not necessarily be after school hours.

"We look for commonality with other schools where we can use English as much as possible in primary schools. It is an ongoing process."

"The medium of language will be in Mandarin but we want to look for commonality with other schools to use English where we can."

Dr Ling was speaking to reporters after witnessing the first tracklaying ceremony for the electrified double track project here today.

Asked if the Chinese community was losing its grip on its stand following the announcement by LDP that it would stick with the Cabinet decision, Dr Ling said it did.