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Mahathir-School

DR M: MCA'S REQUEST NOT RELATED TO EDUCATION

KUALA LUMPUR, March 21 (Bernama) -- The MCA's request to the government to build more Chinese primary schools is not related to getting good education, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said everyone had the right to go to whatever schools they preferred but in the end, they must also get the right education.

"That (MCA's request) is actually not related to getting education. You can get education in an English school, a national school or a Japanese school, but the request is for Chinese schools, that in itself does not mean Chinese schools will give you more knowledge than an English school," he said.

"For the purpose of increasing students' knowledge, the government has implemented teaching of Science and Mathematics in English," he told reporters after opening the 14th Islamic Academic Science Conference.

Dr Mahathir said: "That is something the Chinese community here will gain as much as the others. We use a common language, English, which is whether you like it or not, is the universal language."

He said that if the Chinese community was really interested in education, then the national schools, which provide for teaching in English, would serve the purpose of imparting them the required knowledge.

Dr Mahathir said the Chinese community should also separate cultural issues from education as both were different and unrelated.

"Before this, you can't even have a lion dance here. Now, I actually have to pay them all the time to get them to perform," he said.

Dr Mahathir said everyone must remember that they were living in a multiracial country whose people need to interact and integrate.

"To some extent, we are not saying you should forget that you are of a Chinese or Indian origin, we are not asking you to do that, but at some stage in your life, you should go to the same place to study so that you will get to know each other, if that is good for the country, then it is good for you also," he said.

On calls to the government to ease its control on the education system, Dr Mahathir said the government had been doing that, especially at the tertiary level.

"In the past, there were only state universities, now we have all sorts of private universities and there are places for everyone to study at a nominal cost," he added.

The MCA, in a seven-point memorandum on the Ninth Malaysia Plan, had asked the government to build more Chinese schools, especially in densely-populated areas.

Umno Youth had objected to the request, saying it was contrary to the National Education Policy.

-- BERNAMA

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