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Changes in language to meet communication needs

By Beldeu Singh

LIFE forms mutate or experience adaptive changes. That is a character of life and many languages, including English, Bahasa Malaysia or even Hindi or Punjabi or Urdu for that matter are living languages and are characterised by change or linguistic evolution.

There are many Arabic words in north Indian languages. Now several English words are commonly used in Punjabi in north India. Cultural interaction brought about by trade created the melting pot of words and phrases to flow into other cultures or provide the medium for words to be imbibed by other languages.

Words like belanjawan mean expenditure but Budget encompasses both expenditure as well as revenue. This was explained by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad when he first introduced the word bajet in Parliament. It is not a replacement word, but a new introduction and it has a natural use and acceptance in our national language.

I do not think that there is a "practice of replacing Malay words" nor is there a need to "protect" a language.

There will be changes in languages as they evolve naturally to meet communication needs as part of an enrichment process.

BELDEU SINGH
Selayang

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