

08/02/2003

Status of Bahasa Melayu not affected, says DBP chief

PENANG, Fri. - The teaching of Science and Mathematics in English in schools should not be misconstrued as an attempt to undermine the status of Bahasa Melayu as the official language of the country, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka director-general Datuk A. Aziz Deraman said today.

He said such fears, especially among some Malays, including intellectuals, were unfounded.

"Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has assured the people that Bahasa Melayu will remain the nation's official language.

"Bahasa Melayu will also remain the main medium of teaching in government schools," he said after opening a two-day Komsas (Malay literature) teaching and learning seminar at Universiti Sains Malaysia here.

Present was USM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dzulkifli Abdul Razak.

Aziz said the position of Bahasa Melayu as the national language was enshrined and guaranteed by the Constitution.

"Bahasa Melayu, English and other local languages have their respective roles in the nation's political and socio-economic developments.

"In fact, some of us had also raised our objections to the proposal to teach the two subjects in English.

"However, we were convinced of its noble intentions after attending a dialogue with Dr Mahathir," he said.

DBP was constantly carrying out programmes to promote Bahasa Melayu as a durable and viable language for science, arts and literature.

The seminar, jointly organised by USM's schools of Education and Arts Studies and DBP, was attended by more than 100 teachers from the northern States.