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Teach Maths and Science in English, says Mahathir

KUALA LUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad does not agree with reintroducing English-medium schools but maintains that Mathematics and Science should be taught in English.

He said a pass in English should also be made compulsory and that all the measures were needed to help stem the declining proficiency in the language as well as help pupils master Mathematics and Science.

"I won't agree to reintroducing English-medium schools but I do believe that if we teach Maths and Science in English as well as make English a compulsory subject, it would be sufficient," said Dr Mahathir.

Making a pass in English compulsory and teaching of Mathematics and Science in English, he said, would not breach Malaysia's policy of promoting the national language.

"Other subjects can be taught in Bahasa

Malaysia but Science and Maths are different subjects because the pace of change and new findings happen almost every day," said Dr Mahathir, who is Perdana Global Peace Foundation president, at the end of its conference on the plight of the Rohingya community.

In 1996, Dr Mahathir – as the then Prime Minister – had introduced a policy to teach Mathematics and Science in English but this

policy was reversed in 2012.

On whether the country's students had suffered as a result of the policy reversal, Dr Mahathir said he had received complaints that the quality of local graduates had fallen.

"Their poor English proficiency means they cannot interact with people effectively, which is a problem especially if they work in foreign affairs, for example," he said.

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