

Tsu Koon suggests bilingual solution to PPSMI row
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 30 — Tan Sri Koh Tsu Koon said today secondary school students should be bilingual in maths and science but stuck by the federal government's stand to end a controversial policy promoting English as the medium of instruction for the two subjects.

Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad introduced the policy of teaching of science and mathematics in English (PPSMI) in 2003 to push Malaysia forward in the technological field.

The policy has since been abandoned in favour of one that is pro-Bahasa Malaysia, triggering a public uproar that threatens to divide the country ahead of the looming 13th general election.

Today, Koh said mathematics and science can be taught in the national language at the primary level but should begin to progressively incorporate English at the secondary level.

"In secondary [schools], it should be bilingual, whereby terms and terminologies in English should be introduced systematically so that the connection and continuity into higher education levels will be smoother and more effective," the unity and performance management minister said today.

The Gerakan president also suggested the government set up a national consultation council for a consensus on the issue and to prevent it turning into political fodder.

He denied going against the government's stand with his remarks, saying his suggestion did not vary significantly from the official stand.

Earlier this year, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who is both deputy prime minister and education minister, said the government was reconsidering the scrapping of PPSMI after getting plentiful feedback from pro-English parents.

But he told reporters yesterday the government has decided against giving students an option to study maths and science in English as it would create chaos in the education system.

Certain groups, most prominently the pro-English Parent Action Group for Education (PAGE) have attacked this latest announcement, with the support of the opposition DAP.

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