

Official business to use only Bahasa Malaysia, other languages only for translation – PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reiterated the government's stand on the use of Bahasa Malaysia in all official matters.

However, he said, in certain circumstances, translation to other languages , such as English, had to be made to cater for foreigners attending official functions or events.

“Our constitution has provided for all our needs on protecting the national language, but sometimes, translation to other languages has to be made. However, the official one is in Bahasa Malaysia because the translated version is not official...what is right and can be taken to court is the one written in Bahasa Malaysia.

“We have to take into account foreigners who come to Malaysia, but are not fluent in Bahasa Malaysia. That is why we have ministers using English or Tamil or Mandarin to explain, but the explanation is not considered official,” he said during the question and answer session in the Dewan Rakyat today.

He was responding to a supplementary question from Datuk Dr Shamsul Anuar Nasarah (BN-Lenggong) on the government's stand on reports of some ministries using Mandarin and Tamil for official matters.

To a supplementary question from Datuk Seri Dr Santhara Kumar (PH-Segamat) on the use of English and other languages in congratulatory and condolence messages to other countries, Dr Mahathir said that it was a normal practice.

“In terms of relations with other countries, it is important the message in the letter is understood by the recipient. In fact, I always receive letters from the Eskimo people, for instance, they give the meaning in English, other wise I will not understand.

“It’s a normal practice. What is regarded official is in the language itself. For Malaysia, Bahasa Malaysia is the official language. When I write letters, they are written in Bahasa Malaysia and then translated to English,” he added.

To an original question by Shamsul Anuar on the rights of the Malays and the bumiputera, the prime minister said that had been enshrined in the Federal Constitution and would be upheld by the Pakatan Harapan government.

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