

Decision on PPSMI will be based on cabinet's majority opinion - Dr Mahathir

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PUTRAJAYA, Feb 6 -- The government is still mulling the implementation of the Teaching and Learning of Science and Mathematics in English (PPSMI) and decision will be made based on the majority opinion of the Cabinet members, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced.

Clarifying his own opinion on the matter, Dr Mahathir, who is also acting Minister of Education said if one really loves his race, ensuring the success of the entire race should be his priority rather than only being able to speak well in his own language.

“I am a Malay. I love the Malay race and the Malay language. But we need to give consideration to the development of the Malay race.

“Love the (Malay) race, (but) give priority to success and ability to compete rather than only being able to speak well in the Malay language,” he said at his mandate and aspiration-sharing programme with the MOE staff here today.

Elaborating further at a press conference later, the Prime Minister said a Cabinet Committee has been set up to look into the matter following protest from the public.

“I found reports saying that the government has already decided to implement the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. There is no decision. I was just explaining the matter to the officers at the Education Ministry.

“Somehow it leaked and was reported as if the government had already made its decision on that. We are still considering,” he said.

While admitting that he was the one responsible of introducing the PPSMI before, Dr Mahathir said he still felt that the country would be left behind if it did not learn the two subjects in English.

He said this is because science is not static and is constantly evolving as various new terms are coined in from time to time.

“In the past, we made everything by hand, then we moved to mass production, then mechanical, automation and robot, and now we are in the digital era. It does not stop, the science that we learned in the past cannot be put into use today,” he said.

Asked if the government would get feedback from the public, he said everyone involved, including parents, teachers and students, could express their views to the government.

However, he said the government would not hold any engagement session with the stakeholders as it would be time-consuming.

Dr Mahathir said, at present, teachers are given the option to teach Science and Mathematics either in Malay or English, but the method does not produce good results.

As such, he said the method to teach English needs to be improved by using videos which are prepared by English language experts, shown to the students and coached by class teachers.

“That way, the expertise of those who prepared the videos can really benefit the students,” he added.

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