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Cleanliness campaign for schools to start next month

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SHAH ALAM, Mon. - The Education Ministry will launch a cleanliness campaign for schools throughout the country next month which will require pupils' and teachers' full participation.

Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the approach to this campaign differed from previous ones in that it would require pupils and teachers to be personally involved in taking care of the cleanliness of their schools and their surroundings at all times.

The campaign, he said, was introduced at the request of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who was concerned over the public's declining standards of cleanliness and civic consciousness.

He said the standards of the country's public facilities were on par with those in developed countries but they were either not appreciated or were improperly used by the public due to their poor civic consciousness.

"That is why we want to start instilling this consciousness as early as possible, and thus the introduction of this campaign," he said at Institut Teknologi Mara today.

He had earlier accompanied his mother, Tun Rahah Noh, to receive a posthumous honorary Doctor of Law degree awarded to his late father, former Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak by ITM chairman Tan Sri Abdul Rahman Arshad.

Najib said the guidelines on how to integrate the work required of the pupils and teachers in cleaning their schools and that of workers contracted to do so, were being drafted to ensure that the programme would not interfere with the pupils' studies.

"Once it is launched next month, pupils and teachers in every school in the country, from primary to secondary levels, will be required to be actively involved in taking care of the cleanliness of their schools.

"Under the new approach, pupils and teachers will be involved in the practical aspect of keeping their schools clean, from sweeping and picking up rubbish and cleaning the school compounds."

Najib said the move was not going to be a short-term campaign, but would be made a fixture in every school in an effort to instil a greater appreciation of hygiene among the pupils and teachers.

The main objective of the programme, he said, was to train the pupils into making personal hygiene and the cleanliness of their surroundings a priority in their lives.

To make it more effective, he said, the current Dengue Free Schools Programme would be integrated into the campaign.

Yesterday, Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng said only 16 per cent of schools nationwide had implemented the Dengue Free Schools Programme although 30 per cent of those affected by dengue were of school-going age.

On whether the cyber-pet - the latest craze in the country - would be banned in schools, Najib said the ministry was seriously considering the move.

"Personally, I feel that the toy is not suitable to be brought to school as it can disrupt the pupils' concentration.

"However, the final decision will only be made once the ministry has studied feedback from all interested parties," he said.

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