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Najib-Schools

PAPER ON SEKOLAH AGAMA RAKYAT FOR CABINET

PETALING JAYA, June 21 (Bernama) -- The Education Ministry will submit to the Cabinet soon a working paper on taking over the running of all Sekolah Agama Rakyat (private religious schools) in the country.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has agreed in principle to the proposal for the Education Ministry to take over administration of the schools.

"Such schools are in a weak state, with inadequate facilities and most of the teachers are without qualifications," he said after launching the Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (Unitar) "University On Air" programme here today.

He said the teachers were lowly-paid and this was part of the reason why the schools failed to engage qualified teachers.

Najib said the financial implications of taking over the running of the schools had been discussed with the Finance Ministry.

When taken over, the ministry will send qualified teachers to such schools and its curriculum streamlined with that of the national curriculum.

"The students will follow the national curriculum apart from being given religious lessons as wished for by their parents," he said.

Najib said the Education Ministry is empowered to take over the running of the schools under the Education Act.

On its implementation, he said it would take some time as the proposal involved additional postings and allocations.

He said students in such schools were being exploited by opposition parties and influenced into harbouring hatred for the government and national leadership.

"When these schools are brought into the mainstream, we will ensure that the students are no longer exploited by any group," he said.

Speaking earlier in launching the Unitar programme, Najib said for Malaysia to achieve advanced nation status, it needs to have a level of 40 percent of its population having obtained higher education.

He said the present level of 14 percent was still the highest level achieved among developing countries.

-- BERNAMA

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