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PMR: Exam Syndicate looking into claims

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The Examination Syndicate is looking into claims that the 1999 Penilaian Menengah Rendah history paper contained four errors.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said he did not want to comment further until he heard from the syndicate's history experts.

"There is always an element of subjectivity in history. Sometimes, there are differences of opinion on what had actually happened in history.

"The questions may not be wrong. Let's wait and see what the panel says," he said before closing a seminar for Chinese school principals today.

He was commenting on historian Ranjit Singh Malhi's claim that questions 21, 36, 43 and 57 contained factual and typographical errors.

His claim was contained in a letter to the Editor published in the New Straits Times today.

Najib said the questions were vetted by a panel of experts.

Asked to comment on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's speech earlier which touched on teachers' responsibilities, Najib said there were national school teachers who brought politics into the classroom but they were in the minority.

He said going by the yardstick of examination results, there had in fact been improvements every year, showing that many teachers had done their jobs well.

Najib said Chinese schools generally had an above-average pass rate for national examinations.

Asked about the Chinese School Principals Association's appeal for more teachers, he said from next year, the Ministry would conduct walk-in interviews in all States for intake into training colleges.

Asked about requests to have the Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah moved to a date which was closer to the end of the school year, he said the exam would remain as it is.

The Ministry had studied all factors including the timetable for other examinations and also the need for the UPSR results to be out in time for students to prepare to enter secondary school.

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