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Musa-Education

QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN RURAL SCHOOLS TO BE RAISED

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 28 (Bernama) -- The gap in the quality of education between rural and urban schools will be bridged, Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad said today.

He was now studying the matter and looking for ways to raise the quality of education in the rural areas, he told reporters at the Parliament lobby, here.

The focus would be on all aspects including physical, quality of teachers and students and the conduct of the curriculum, he said.

"I realise that many parties have placed their hopes in the ministry to overcome several problems plaguing our education system. It is a very heavy task but God willing, I will try to discharge that responsibility," he said.

Musa, the former vice-chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia, was the first non-politician to be appointed a cabinet minister in the country.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, when explaining his appointment, said he wanted the injection of new ideas into the education system.

Asked whether he would make any policy changes to the pre-school education system as called for by a senator today, Musa said it was premature for him to answer the question.

"I will take certain steps when I have finished studying the existing policies to gauge their effectiveness," he said.

Senator Hajah Melati Ali, during the debate on the Supplementary Supply Bill 1999 in the Dewan Negara today, had called on the government not to allow non-governmental organisations to set up kindergartens, claiming that they had used these places to inculcate hatred for the government and its leaders in the children.

She also said that if the kindergartens were allowed to continue, the Education Ministry should control their curriculum to ensure that they were uniform and in line with the national education policy.

Musa said he would give attention to education at all levels, from kindergarten to the university, whether private or public, because education was about nurturing an individual in an integrated manner.

He also said that he would study policy matters and not the running of the ministry which was the job of Education Director-General Datuk Dr Abdul Shukor Abdullah.

He said Dr Shukor would announce the Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) results tomorrow because it was a professional matter and did not need a minister to do it.

-- BERNAMA

AFY JK