

31/08/1999

Syllabus for Islamic Studies to be revised

JITRA, Mon. - The Islamic Studies syllabus for primary and secondary schools will be revised to address weaknesses.

Announcing this today, Education Minister Datuk Najib Tun Razak said the revised syllabus would be "ready in a few months".

He said the revision was comprehensive with input from various groups, including parents and religious scholars.

Even Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had given guidelines on how the syllabus could be improved.

"We are aware the present syllabus has weaknesses although it is good in some areas.

"The present syllabus does not stress enough on the practical side of Islam and understanding of the religion," he told reporters after the foundation stone laying ceremony at the construction site of the Pusat Ilmu in Kampung Pulau Pisang near here.

The RM580,000 information technology-based centre, to be built on a 1.2ha site, will be used to teach students about IT, the Quran and religion.

The Pusat Ilmu will also become a venue for religious talks and forums, with IT facilities such as tele-conferencing.

The foundation-stone was laid by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Also present were Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid.

Najib was asked to comment on Dr Mahathir's speech at the opening of Sekolah Kebangsaan Bandar Darulaman near here earlier.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir said some Muslim parents had requested that their children be exempted from attending Islamic Studies classes and allowed to attend Moral Studies classes instead.

Dr Mahathir said parents opted to send their children for Moral Studies classes because they were angry some teachers did not convey the true teachings of Islam.

He said some teachers used the classes for political purposes including instilling hatred for the Government.

However, Dr Mahathir said, Muslim students were unable to opt for Moral Studies because it was compulsory for them to attend Islamic Studies classes.

Asked if the Government would consider giving options to Muslim students to choose which subject they wanted to take, Najib said it would not be done.

He said the revised syllabus would satisfy all parties.

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