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Teachers warned not to misuse Internet

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IPOH, Thurs. - The Education Ministry will take stern action against teachers who download anti-establishment information from the Internet and then distribute it to their colleagues and students.

Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said such action was a serious matter that went beyond the scope of their duties.

"They are not supposed to misuse school facilities made available for students," he told reporters after addressing Perak school headmasters and senior education officials at Politeknik Ungku Omar today.

The meeting with the people in the education fraternity is part of the minister's nationwide tour to explain the latest political and economic developments in the country.

Najib said the Ministry had sent circulars to school administrators on the matter and district education department officials were also directed to monitor the situation.

"I have also been reminding teachers from time to time not to abuse the Internet and poison the minds of others," Najib said.

He said disciplinary action could be taken against such irresponsible teachers and they should not then blame the Ministry for being harsh.

Najib said students looked upon teachers as role models and it was irresponsible of them to instigate students to hate the Government.

He said three secondary school teachers from a State had been transferred to rural schools after they were caught distributing Opposition party membership forms.

"Disciplinary action will be taken against them if there is sufficient proof. However, they will be given the opportunity to defend themselves first," he said.

Najib said the Ministry was also investigating several other cases of a similar nature before it decided on the next course of action.

In another development, Najib said the Cabinet had approved a RM10 million allocation to supply all secondary schools with advanced robotic equipment.

"We are now negotiating with the Treasury to purchase the equipment from one source," he said, adding that the equipment would be distributed to schools as soon as possible this year.

Najib said robotics would be the technology of the new millennium and students must know how to assemble it and some idea of the workings of artificial intelligence.

Earlier, in his speech, he said the people should be grateful to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his team who had been working tirelessly to revive the economy.

"They went against the recommendations put forward by the International Monetary Fund and their belief is now producing the desired results," said Najib in reference to the present bullish stock market.

He said interest rates had come down drastically and it was conducive for businessmen to take loans and venture or revive their activities.

He said it shocked him and Education Ministry officials when the Government announced a 21 per cent cut in allocation at the height of the economic problem.

"We had to slash expenditure on food supplements for children from poor families, textbook loan and construction of schools in rural areas."

Najib said the Ministry was allocated about 20 per cent of the funds

from the annual Budget and this showed that the Government gave priority to the well-being of students, teachers and the education system.

He said the Ministry had been allocated an additional RM4.5 billion under the Mid-Term Review of the Seventh Malaysia Plan tabled recently.

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