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Education Ministry to act against students, teachers who take part in demonstration

Chok Suat Ling

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The Education Ministry will act against students and teachers participating in the demonstration proposed for Saturday.

Its minister, Senator Tan Sri Musa Mohamad, in issuing this warning today, said he advised students and teachers not to be involved as such demonstrations had a tendency to become violent.

"The ministry is against such demonstrations and will not hesitate to punish students and teachers found participating in them," he told reporters after launching a Formula Malaysia seminar at Hotel Singgahsana. The one-day seminar was attended by some 200 participants including students.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said on Sunday that he had heard that Parti Keadilan Nasional planned to hold a demonstration on Saturday to "remember something".

He had also said that he saw a trend towards the use of force by the Opposition in its political activities.

On the proposal to accord principals and teachers with auxiliary police powers, Musa said the director-general of Education Datuk Dr Abdul Shukor Abdullah would be meeting with the police soon on the matter. He said the proposal had been brought up in the past, but "we must see what form it should take".

Yesterday, Abdul Shukor said the ministry was not comfortable with the proposal to accord principals and teachers policing powers to help curb the threat of gangsterism in schools. This, he said, was because teachers were more comfortable in their role as educators.

On the Formula Malaysia campaign which is aimed at inculcating a spirit of patriotism, Musa said it was crucial for the new generation to be prepared to face the "global playing field".

"Patriotism will help build up Malaysia's defences against threats from parties outside who are not comfortable with our stability and harmonious existence."

He said at present, co-curricular activities in schools were helping to instil patriotism in and a sense of independence among students.

The campaign was launched by Dr Mahathir in September last year.

Campaign committee chairman Datuk Hassan Harun later said that the committee was finalising the establishment of a foundation to help fund activities which reflect the spirit of "Malaysia Boleh". "We have just completed the foundation's draft constitution."

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