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Minister: No special programme to curb social ills of community

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein today said his ministry would not formulate any special programmes to overcome the social ills plaguing Indian youths.

Instead, he said, the Rakan Muda programme, which would be relaunched on Oct 14, should be used to incorporate whatever programme the MIC has planned.

"Gangsterism should not be seen as the Indian community's problem. It is a national problem which we have to tackle together. Isolating it and formulating separate programmes does not prevent the problem from cropping up in other communities," said Hishammudin, who is also the Umno Youth chief.

He said the Rakan Muda, which would be officially relaunched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in January, would need as many volunteers and activities as possible.

"Indian youth leaders can recruit youngsters to prevent them from getting involved in unhealthy activities.

"By January I would know how many volunteers I have and the activities that have been lined up. Indian youths should take this opportunity to actively participate in it," he said after closing the MIC National Workshop for divisional Youth Leaders at the MIC headquarters here.

He however said racially-based issues which arise from workshops would be taken into account when formulating the Rakan Muda programmes.

"The Rakan Muda programmes may not overcome all the problems faced by the youngsters but with the cooperation of all parties, including volunteers, it would reduce social ills drastically.

"The Rakan Muda programmes would be formulated and carried out by the youngsters who understand the needs of the country's youths better.

"I have received feedback from youngsters and I know what sort of activities they expect," said Hishammuddin.

Earlier, in the closing speech, MIC youth chief Datuk Nelson Renganathan had asked Hishammuddin to set up sports complexes in all squatter areas.

"Sports facilities should be made easily available and affordable so that youths have an avenue to spend their time constructively instead of getting involved in unhealthy activities."

Hishammuddin, in his reply later, said the Government did not have special allocation for political parties to overcome social ills.

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